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Mr. Warburton (1740-1800) hath this Catalogue
of Freethinkers, viz:— Blount,

Chubb

Collings

Coward

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Tindal

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Strut

4 Works in 1 vol

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[Collins]
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DISCOURSE

O F

FREE-THINKING,

Relat Occasion'd by *Cramer*

The Rise and Growth of a Sect
call'd FREE-THINKERS.

Anthony Collins

Mundum tradidit hominum disputationi Deus. Eccl. 3. 11. Vulg.
Unusquisque suo sensu abundet. Rom. 14. 5. Ib.

Nil tam temerarium, tamque indignum sapientis gravitate
atque constantiâ, quam, quod non satis exploratè perceptum
sit & cognitum sine ulla dubitatione defendere. Cic. de Nat.
Deor. l. 1.

'Tis a hard Matter for a Government to settle Wit.
Characteristicks, vol. 1. p. 19.

Fain would they confound Licentiousness in Morals with Liberty in
Thought, and make the Libertine resemble his direct Opposite.
Ib. vol. 3. p. 306.

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L O N D O N,

Printed in the Year M. DCC. XIII.

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The Bill and Growth of a ...
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A
LETTER

TO

* * * * * Esquire.

S I R,

A POLOGIES for *self-evident Truths* can never have any effect on those who have so little Sense as to deny *them*. They are the Foundation of all Reasoning, and the only just Bottom on which Men can proceed in convincing one another of the Truth: and by consequence whoever is capable of denying *them*, is not in a condition to be inform'd. Mere ignorant Men, or Men destitute of those *Principles of Knowledge*, may perhaps be capable of Information: Their Ignorance does not exclude them from assenting to a *self-evident Truth* when they first hear it, nor from admitting any Consequences deducible from it. But Men who deny what is self-evident,

evident, are not only destitute of such Principles of Knowledge, but must have Principles inconsistent with the Principles of Knowledge, and consistent with the greatest Absurdities. And under that dis-temper'd State of Mind, it remains only for them to take up with some disorder'd Fancies of their own; or, which is much more common, with the Dictates of artificial designing Men or crack-brain'd Enthusiasts: for as none else presume to be Guides to others in Matters of Speculation, so none who think they ought to be guided in those Matters make choice of any but such for their Guides. And if they ever depart from the Sentiments they have once imbib'd, and from being obstinate in one Set of Opinions become obstinate in another; their Change must still be founded on the same Motives, and their Opinions be as absurd as at first. For as Truth will never serve the Purposes of Knaves, so it will never suit the Understandings of Fools; and the latter will ever be as well pleas'd in being deceiv'd, as the former in deceiving. It is therefore without the least hopes of doing any good, but purely to comply with your Request, that I send you this *Apology for Free-Thinking*; which, as it is one of those Subjects too evident to be made plainer, and which ought to be admitted on the first Proposal, so all that can be said in its behalf must be built on Topicks less evident than the thing it self.

S E C T. I.

THAT I may proceed orderly, I will begin with *defining* the Term.

BY *Free-Thinking* then I mean, *The Use of the Understanding, in endeavouring to find out the Meaning of any Proposition whatsoever, in considering the nature of the Evidence for or against it, and in judging of it according to the seeming Force or Weakness of the Evidence.* This Definition cannot, I conceive, be excepted against by the Enemies of *Free-Thinking*, as not including the Crime with which they charge *Free-Thinkers*, in order to render them odious to *unthinking People* (for if there is any Crime in *Free-Thinking*, that Crime must be contain'd in a Definition which lays no manner of restraint upon Thinking) and they must allow, that if I vindicate Man's *Right to think freely* in the full extent of my Definition, I not only apologize for my self, who profess to *think freely* every day *de quolibet ente*, but for all the *Free-Thinkers* who ever were, or ever shall be.

TO prove this *Right to think freely*, I argue,

1st. IF the Knowledg of some Truths be requir'd of us by God : if the Knowledg of others be useful to Society ; if the Knowledg of no Truth be forbidden us by God, or hurtful to us ; then we have a *right* to know, or may lawfully know, any Truth whatsoever. And if we have a *right* to know any Truth whatsoever, we have a *right to think freely*, or (according to my Definition) *to use our Understandings, in endeavouring to find out the Meaning of any Proposition whatsoever, in considering the nature of the Evidence for or against it, and in judging of it according to the seeming Force or Weakness of the Evidence*: because there is no other way to discover the Truth.

2^{dly}. AS in *manual Arts* we do only by *free Trial, Comparison, and Experience* of every thing, come to know what is best and perfect in each Art ; so in the *Sciences*, Perfection is only to be attain'd by *Free-Thinking*.

LET Painters be so far confin'd in their Art by the Religion of their Country, as to have it thought unlawful to paint any living Creature ; it is evident the Art in that particular would be narrow'd and restrain'd, and we should want many beautiful Pieces, for which *Pagan and Christian Divinity furnish*

nish the Painter with Matter. And if any bold and *free* Painter should transgress the *establish'd* Law of Painting, and venture upon painting either a God or Goddess, or any Passage of the Life of our *Blessed Saviour*; nothing is more plain than that the first Draught would be as short of the Perfection of our best Pictures, as the *Painter* himself must be short of our best *Painters* in Experience. Nay, let *free Painting* be allow'd, Perfection will never be reach'd in that Art, unless sutable Encouragements be given to *free Painters* for what is excellent in its kind, to the end there may be numbers of Men employ'd, who by Emulation may strive to exceed one another in their Performances. Thus the *Italians*, by the publick Encouragement given, excel us *Britans* in Painting (tho *free Painting* is allow'd in each Country) and we in all likelihood, for want of many Hands being employ'd and encourag'd, shall continue for ever in our *barbarous State*, with respect to any tolerable degree of a just Taste, or Ability to perform in that Art.

IN like manner, let Men be restrain'd from thinking on any Science or any part of a Science, they must be ignorant so far as the Restraint goes. And if a few Men take now and then a little liberty, and break thro the *establish'd* Restraint, their Thoughts will never be so perfect as if all Men were

allow'd and encourag'd to think of that matter: but their Progress in thinking will be only proportionate to that degree of *Free-Thinking* which prevails. Thus before the Restoration of Learning, when Men were subject to the Impositions of Priests, a prodigious Ignorance prevail'd. And when they began to think, their first Notions were rude and imperfect, and Time and Pains were necessary to bring them to that degree of Justness they are at present. It was by gradual Progress in *Thinking*, that Men got so much Knowledg in *Astronomy*, as to know that the Earth was of an *orbicular Figure*, and that it moves about the Sun. It was by that means, that we are arriv'd at a Demonstration of the Existence of but one God, and at that strict and philosophical Notion of him, as a Being destitute of all Parts and Passions. And thus it has been with respect to all our other Discoveries.

BESIDES, we are not only so far ignorant in the Sciences, as we are under any restraint from thinking about them; but we must be ignorant in those Sciences whereof we pretend to think, if we refuse to think of any Science whatsoever. For there is a * Relation, Harmony, Dependency, and

* Omnes Artes, quæ ad humanitatem pertinent, habent quoddam commune vinculum, & quasi cognatione quâdam inter se continentur. *Cicero pro Archiâ Poetâ.*

Connection between all things; and the Knowledge of one Science or Art can never be thorowly obtain'd without the Knowledge of other Arts and Sciences. Nay, take any Book that is a Master-piece in its kind, and you will find it has a relation to them all, and that a very general and extensive Knowledge was necessary to its Composition. In the *Iliad* of HOMER, there is not an *Art* or *Science*, or Branch of any *Art* or *Science*, but there are some parts which have relation to it, and which the nature of the Work requir'd; and those parts are as accurately and justly perform'd, as if each part had been done by one who was particularly vers'd in the Art or Science refer'd to. As for instance, HOMER could never have describ'd as he ought, nor in the manner he has done, a *Chariot* or a *Chariot-Wheel*, without the particular Knowledge of a Coachmaker: and such Knowledge was absolutely necessary to his purpose, for if he had talk'd of those things without that accurate Knowledge, he had certainly fallen into those Mistakes, which Men ever do, when they venture to talk of what they do not understand; and if he had omitted such Descriptions, his Poem which he design'd for Eternity to please and instruct Mankind had been imperfect. It is this universal Knowledge of things display'd in the *Iliad*, which makes it esteem'd so perfect a Work, and is the Foundation of that known Commendation of

HOMER

HOMER by the *Criticks*, That the *Principles of all Arts and Sciences* are contain'd in him

BUT to come to an Instance wherein we are more concern'd: The *Bible* contains a Collection of Tracts given us at divers times by God himself; and consequently every thing therein mention'd is handled with the utmost degree of Exactness: for it is impossible that God, when he condescends to teach Mankind by Writing or Books, should write as ill or worse than mortal Men, and act against the Rules of *Art* in writing, and express Error and Falshood instead of Justness and Proportion.

NOW there is not perhaps in the World so *miscellaneous* a Book, and which treats of such Variety of things as the *Bible* does. There is a natural History of the Creation of the whole Universe, and of an universal Deluge of this Earth: and a Civil and Ecclesiastical History of all Mankind from the Beginning of the World for above 2000 Years, and of a particular Nation for above 800 Years. There are contain'd in it the municipal Laws of a Country, the Institution of two Religions (one whereof was to put an end to the other) several natural and miraculous *Phænomena* of Nature, Descriptions of magnificent Buildings, References to Husbandry, Sailing, Physick, Pharmacy, Mathematicks,

thematically, and every thing else that can be named. And indeed the Compass of such a *History* shews that no Art or Science can be untouch'd in it. To understand the Matter therefore of this Book, requires the most Thinking of all other Books; since to be master of the whole, a Man must be able to think justly in every Science and Art. Who can understand the Order and Perfection of the historical part, and the Completion of the Prophecies about our Blessed Saviour, without being a consummate Master in ancient History, and Chronology, and in the Laws of each of those Arts? How many Years of the Life of the greatest *Chronologer* of the World (the present Bishop of *Worcester*) must have been spent only in adjusting the *Seventy Weeks* of DANIEL to the Times of the MESSIAH, when his Lordship's Work on that Subject has already been above ten years in the Press? Who can frame an Idea of the Beauty and Magnificence of SOLOMON's Temple, or of that Model delineated in EZEKIEL, without a perfect Knowledg in *Mathematicks*, and in particular of the Rules of Architecture? Who can have a just Notion of the *Creation* and *Deluge*, without the Knowledg of all Nature? How is it possible for any Man to enter into the Meaning of the several Passages of Scripture, which seemingly exhibit to us an Idea of God after a human manner, without the most refin'd *Metaphysics*,

physicks, and the deepest thinking and philosophizing on the Nature and Attributes of God? Nay, the *Morality* of the *Holy Scripture* is not to be precisely and distinctly understood, without an antecedent Knowledge in *Ethicks*, or the *Law of Nature*. Who can without a Knowledge in that *Law* understand wherein consist the Duties of *loving our Enemies*, of *not caring for the morrow*, of *not having two Coats*, and all other Dutys express'd in so universal a manner? The Passages themselves not exhibiting the necessary Limitations and Restrictions which are imply'd, those Restrictions and Limitations are only to be deduc'd from the *Law of Nature*. Nay, when the Duties enjoin'd are as *universal* as the Expressions, that *Universality* is only to be known by considering whether the *Law of Nature* in those cases admits of any Limitation or no. So that no *moral Duty* whatsoever contain'd in Scripture can be precisely and with certainty understood, without a Knowledge of the *Law of Nature*.

UPON the whole therefore, Thinking upon all human Sciences being the only way of arriving at perfection in them; nay, being the only method to make a Man understand the sublimest of all Sciences, *Theology*, or the *Will of God contain'd in the Holy Scriptures*: it must be at least lawful, or a Man's right, to *think freely*.

3dly. IF Men either neglect to think, or come once to be persuaded they have no *right to think freely*, they can not only obtain no Perfection in the Sciences, but must, if they will have any Opinions, run into the grossest Absurdities imaginable both in Principle and Practice. What absurd Notions of a Deity have formerly prevail'd, not only among *Pagans*, but even among *Christians*? who tho they did not with the *Pagans* suppose God to be like an *Ox*, or a *Cat*, or a *Plant*, yet some of the most ancient Fathers of the Church no less absurdly suppos'd him to be *material*; and many *Christians* in all Ages suppos'd him to have the Shape of a Man, till *Thinking* about the Nature of God did establish his Spirituality among Men of Sense in every Country of *Christians*.

WHAT absurd Notions in Religion, contrary to the most obvious Notions of Sense and Reason, overspread the whole Christian Church for many Ages? Infalibility in a single Person, or in a Council, the Power of the Priest to damn and save, the Worship of Images, Pictures, Saints, and Relicks, and a thousand other Absurdities as gross as ever prevail'd in any Pagan Nation, were Opinions almost universally receiv'd and believ'd by *Christians*, (and what is still more wonderful, even while they

they receiv'd a Book for Divine Revelation point-blank contrary to them all :) till the Thinking of a few, some whereof sacrific'd their Lives by so doing, gave a new Turn to the Christian World, and produc'd a prodigious Change, by establishing contrary Notions in some Countries, and by obliging those who pretended to retain the old ones, to vary a little out of pure shame in the Explication of their Phrases and Expressions.

LASTLY, What Absurdities prevail'd in Morality, Astronomy, Natural Philosophy, and every other Science? Self-defence in any case whatsoever was by the Primitive Fathers held unlawful: Second Marriages were esteem'd by them a kind of Adultery: Usury was suppos'd to be forbid by the Law of God. To maintain there were *Antipodes*, was *Heresy*: And *Galileus*, even in the last Age, was imprison'd for asserting the Motion of the Earth. In short, for a Picture of ancient Absurdities, a Man need but examine any one now-a-days who has never *thought freely* of things, and he will ever find him unable to advance one word of Truth in any matter of Science whatsoever, no not even in his Notions of God and Religion, tho he hears the most perfect Discourses every week to set him right, and reads his Bible at home. For Men are incapable of Information either from Discourse or Reading, unless they have accusom'd
them-

themselves to Thinking, and by that Habit are qualify'd to think of the Subject whereon they hear or read a Discourse. To be inform'd, consists in being made to think justly and truly of things: But how should Men think justly, who do not think *freely*? How indeed can Men think at all of any thing of which they do not think freely? For what is a Restraint of Free-Thinking on any Subject, but somewhat which hinders me from thinking on that Subject?

BUT to give you the perfectest Image I am able, how unavoidable Absurdities are both in Principle and Practice, if Thinking is restrain'd; I will put the Case of *Free-Seeing*, and suppose the same methods made use of to prevent *Free-Seeing* which are to prevent *Free-Thinking*. Suppose then, That certain Men have a fancy in their heads, that it is absolutely necessary either to the Peace of Society or some other great purpose, that all Men should have the same Belief with relation to certain Objects of the Eyes; and in order to obtain that end, will make all Men under their power subscribe the same *Confession* of *Eye-sight Faith*. Now such a fancy as this can hardly come into any Mens heads, but either of those who are some way or other very remarkable for that kind of Madness which common People will be apt to mistake for *Divine Illumination*, or else of cunning projecting Fellows
who

who have a design upon Mens pockets. For I think Men of real Sense, and that have no interested Designs, will either judg all Mistakes of that nature to be pass'd over and forgiven, since no Man can be willingly guilty of them; or if they should happen to think such Mistakes to be of very bad consequence, and to be unpardonable, yet they will judg that the best way to make Men *see truly*, is to make them *see freely*; and that it is more reasonable to let all Men trust to their own Eyes (who have the greatest Interest in not deceiving themselves) than to oblige them to take up with an *Eye-sight Faith*, upon the Authority of others who have nothing else at best but their Eye-sight to direct them, and who may as well be mistaken as any body else thro Weakness of Eyes, and besides may have a design to deceive Mankind. I say therefore, that whoever is capable of such a ridiculous Project, must be either a weak or designing Man. And let him be which you please, he will of course make an absurd *Confession* of *Eye-sight Faith*. The former, for want of a full and impartial Examination, will take up with the first false Sensations of things; and the latter will more certainly do so, to make himself the more necessary in *explaining, defending, paraphrasing, note-making, and commenting* upon Eyes and *Eye-sight Faith*. So that I will suppose among the various and contradictory Forms of

Con-

Confession, which Men of different Whims, or of different Interests and Designs, will make at different times, *One*, to consist of these following *Articles*.

* *That a Ball can go thro a Table :*

That two Balls may be made out of one little one :

That a Stone can be made to vanish out of sight :

That a Knot can be undone with Words :

That a Thred may be burnt to pieces, and made whole with the Ashes :

That one Face may be a hundred or a thousand :

And lastly, *That a Counter may be turn'd into a Groat.*

THESE Propositions being drawn up in form, as the Standard of *Eye-sight Faith*, it will be absolutely necessary either that Men should be oblig'd to subscribe to their Truth, or that none be allow'd publickly to contradict them, or at least that some Encouragement be given to those who profess to believe and teach them; for otherwise no End would be serv'd by drawing them up, and Men would be as much at liberty to use their Eyes as they were before.

* Hocus Pocus Jun. p. 13, 15, 36, 43, 45, 47.

NOR is it to be imagin'd, That the zealous Advocates for them will content themselves with the mere Imposition of those Absurdities. They will introduce several other new Absurdities by the various *Comments* and *Turns* which so many Absurdities in *Eye-sight* will oblige them to make. The several Propositions will be said by *them* to be *above*, but *not contrary* to *Eye-sight*. Instances will be given of ten thousand Mistakes in using our Eyes. It will be esteem'd dangerous trusting to *carnal Eye-sight*, and be said that we ought to rely on the Authority of those Men who have *Pensions* and *Salaries* on purpose to study those things, and would not deserve what they receive, should Men use their own *Eye-sight*. And as for those few Men who should dare to use their own Eyes, no Punishments would be too bad for them; and the least Evil they could expect, would be to be render'd odious to the Multitude, under the reproachful Ideas of *Scepticks*, *Latitudinarians*, *Free-Seers*, *Opiniators*, Men ty'd by no Authority, and who lay all things in common, how universally soever receiv'd; to be represented sometimes as Madmen, at other times as subtle cunning Fellows who acted by Confederacy, and had secret underhand *Pensions* from the Lord knows who, and who were assisted by the Devil.

ALL this may perhaps at first view be look'd on as impossible; I will therefore justify the Representation I have made, from Matters of Fact practis'd both among *Pagans* and *Christians*.

TO begin first with the *Pagans*: The whole Affair of *Oracles* among them was nothing else but the Artifice of Priests to impose on the Senses of the People. The *Oracular Temples* or *Churches* were built in mountainous Countries, where of course there were abundance of Caverns and Holes, and where Ecchoes, Noises, and dismal Prospects struck those who visited them with a superstitious Awe. The *Temples* themselves were contriv'd to produce the same effect. They were full of subterraneous Caverns and Machines, like a Play-house for the Priests to act their Parts in them. The *Pagans* likewise had *Speaking Oaks*, *Nodding*, *Sweating*, *Weeping*, *Bleeding*, and *Speaking Statues*. But one of the commonest *Miracles* among them, and which was universally believ'd among ordinary People, was, That the Gods themselves came down from Heaven, and eat of the Repasts which the Priests prepar'd for them at the expence of the People. To preserve a right Belief in all these matters among the People, the Priests kept all * *Unbelievers* as much as

* *Procul ite Profani.*

possible from coming within any distance of them when they began their Show. All *Epicureans* were declar'd incapable of being initiated into any of the *Pagan* Mysteries of Religion; and both *Epicureans* and *Christians* were religiously chas'd away, before ever the Priests would pronounce any *Oracles*, or begin any of their Tricks. And when the *Christians* grew so numerous that they were able to stand their ground, and refus'd to retire at the Word of Command; the Priests declar'd there were so many impious Persons present, that the God would not vouchsafe to speak, and that they could do *no Miracles* because of *their* Infidelity, no more than the * *Pawawers* in *America* could in the presence of the *old Clothes* of some *Christian* Sailors. Not only the *unbelieving Christians* and *Epicureans* were excluded from *Free-Seeing*, but the *Pagan Believers* were allow'd to see no further than their Faith qualify'd them to do with safety. They were not suffer'd to examine the Insides of *Temples* or *Statues*, nor the Evidence the Priests gave of the Gods coming down from Heaven to eat upon Earth. No, about all these matters the People were to have a Faith, which *Free-Seeing* would have destroy'd; and that would have render'd the Priests as contemptible, as *DANIEL* did the *Priests of BELL*, or as the *Christians* did the *Oracular Priests*,

* *Waser's Voyages*, p. 29.

when the Craft of *Oracles* was laid open before the whole World.

THIS sort of Eye-sight Faith is kept up among some *Christians* as well as Pagans. * *There is a Persuasion among the Greeks and Armenians, that every Easter-Eve there is a miraculous Flame descends from Heaven into the holy Sepulcher of our Blessed Saviour (which the Latins expose as a shameful Imposture, perhaps out of envy that others should be masters of so gainful a business.)* And they further believe, *That the Holy Ghost himself in the shape of a Dove flies about the top of the Cupola of the Church just over the holy Sepulcher.* But the Reception of the holy Flame is trusted to two Priests, *one a Greek, and the other an Armenian,* who go into the holy Sepulcher, shut the door, and suffer no body to see freely what they do, and then come out with Torches lighted by the *holy Flame.* And no doubt the Affair of the *Dove* is trusted either to a *Priest,* or some body on whom they can safely rely for the keeping of so valuable a Secret. Nor is it to be thought but both Priests and People are ready to call any Man *Atheist* or *Impious,* who should desire the *liberty* of going into the *holy Sepulcher* with the *two Priests* in order to see freely, or should desire to

* Maundrel's *Voyage from Aleppo to Jerusalem*, p. 93, 94, 95, 96.

make any experiment on the *Dove*, to try whether it was the *Holy Ghost* or no. For the *Zeal* of the *Priests* must be in proportion to the *Gain* they make by this *Trick*, and of the *People* in proportion to the *Benefit* they imagine they shall receive from the *holy Flame*: for they think, *If they can but have the happiness to be bury'd in a Shroud smutted with this Celestial Fire, it will certainly secure them from the Flames of Hell.*

ANOTHER Miracle of the like nature with the preceding, is firmly believ'd by the * *Greeks*, but especially by the *Women*. They carry annually in procession *three Pictures*, one of *St. GEORGE*, another of the *Virgin MARY*, and another of *some other Saint*, which strike with *Sticks*, or belabour the *Back and Shoulders* of those who carry them, more or less, according to the *Sins* of their *Bearers*. This *Trick* *Sir P. RICAUT* himself saw, and he assures us, *That the Belief of the Miracle has taken so deep root in the Minds of the Ignorant, that it would be hard to undeceive them, without danger to the whole Fabrick of the Christian Religion: for this Belief being equally fix'd with the Doctrines of Faith, the Confutation of this one would bring the others into question. And no doubt therefore, but these People must be as zealous against Free-Seers,*

* Ricaut's *Present State of the Ottoman Empire*, p. 148, 151.

(if any such dared to desire the Inspection of the *Pictures*) as themselves are *short-sighted* and absurd.

THE present *Roman Priests* are not behind-hand with the old *Heathen Priests*, or with the present *Greek and Armenian* in their Impositions on the Peoples *Eye-sight* (relying firmly on a Maxim of one of their own Poets, * *That he only sees the things of Heaven, who shuts his Eyes and believes*) and are infinitely superiour to any Set of Priests that ever existed, in their Zeal against *Free-Seers*.

SHOULD any one desire to inspect the annual *Miracle* of the *Liquefaction* of St. JANUARIUS's Blood at *Naples*, or any of their numerous *Sweating, Bleeding, Nodding, and Weeping Statues*; or to examine strictly those Men upon whom the daily *Trick* of *casting out Devils* is perform'd; or to see the famous † *Candle* of *Arras*, which the *Virgin MARY* deliver'd to the *Bishop* of that place before a great *Assembly* of the People in the Church above 600 Years ago, and which has burnt ever since without wasting; nothing short of Death would be the consequence of such a Demand: tho the Author of the Relation of the last *Miracle* invites Protestants

* Che le cose del Ciel sol colui vede,
Chi ferra gli occhi, e crede.

Filli di Sciro del Conte Guidubaldo de Bonarelli; p. 168.

† *Discourse of the Miracles of the Roman Church*, p. 65, 66.

to come to *Arras* to see the truth of it, in order to their Conviction. Nay, so numerous are the Impositions on the *Eye-sight*, and so strict a care is taken to prevent Men from using their Eyes, that there is not an inquisitive Person, or a Man who desires to see freely, to be met with in a whole Country. The *Popish Laity* will not bear so great an Approach to Infidelity as the Suspicion of a Trick, and the *Popish Priests* have good reason not to suffer the beginning of any Examination. And I must needs say, how much soever I contend for *Free-Seeing*, I cannot but commend the Consistency of the *Popish Policy*, and prefer it to the *Policy* of certain half-witted *Politicians*, who draw People in with a pretence of fair Play, by telling them they shall and ought to see freely; whereas if they do not see with the Eyes of their *Guides*, but desire to see with their own, they then use them, not indeed so ill as the *Papists*, but as ill as they can; that is, as ill as that degree of Ignorance and Stupidity which prevails will allow them to do.

LASTLY, The *Popish* and *Lutheran Priests* are guilty of an Imposition on the *Eye-sight* beyond all the Instances already mention'd. The first pretend, that the Bread and Wine in the Lord's Supper do by their Consecration become the very Body and Blood of Christ, and face Men down in

in it, contrary to the Testimony of their Senses: and the latter, no less contrary to the Testimony of Mens Senses, make their Followers believe, that the Body and Blood of Christ are superadded to the Bread and Wine. Which is a piece of Impudence equal to that of a Man's Wife, who, when her Husband caught her in bed with a Priest, told him, *It was nothing but a Deception of the Devil to abuse a Man of God*, and that *she hoped he would believe his own dear Wife before his Eyes.*

THUS the Reader sees the monstrous Absurdities which do in fact and must necessarily arise from the Methods employ'd to restrain Men in the Use of their Faculties. But if it be possible, the Absurdities which relate to the Faculties of the Mind must be greater and more numerous than those which relate to the Senses; because Men do use their Senses more than their Understanding, and by consequence have clearer Ideas of the Objects of Sense than of the Objects of the Understanding.

4thly. A N Y Restraint whatsoever from Reason on Thinking, is absurd in it self. No just Restraint can be put to my Thinking, but some Thought, some Proposition, or Argument, which shews me that it is not lawful for me to think on the Subject I propose to do. As for instance, I propose to consider,

consider, *Whether the Christian Religion is founded on Divine Revelation*; but am told, or suggest to my self, the great Danger and Sinfulness of thinking on that Subject, for fear I should be caught by the sophistical Arguments of Infidels, and so be eternally damn'd for my Unbelief: whereas I am in the way of Salvation, and in no danger in my unexamining state; and therefore it is sinful in me to run any hazard, by thinking on that matter.

IT is evident this restraining Argument must be *thought freely on* or examin'd; for if I do not examine it, I cannot know that I ought to be restrain'd by it, but may proceed in my propos'd Enquiry.

NOW let this restraining Argument be examin'd, and it will be found to have no manner of weight in it to restrain me. For what can be more absurd? I have no way of knowing Truth from Falshood, or whether I am in a safe or a dangerous state, but by using the Understanding and Reason God has given me; and yet I must without any reason at all suppose my self in a right and safe way. Nay, I am deter'd from taking the best method of preventing dangerous Mistakes, for fear of falling into dangerous Mistakes; which is as if I should be deter'd from using my Eyes, for fear I should mistake in using them; and I should walk abroad with my Eyes shut, because of the possi-

possibility of falling if I should walk abroad with my Eyes open. So that this restraining Argument is manifestly absurd, which pretends to divert me a moment from the Prosecution of my Enquiry.

I CANNOT pretend to assign, and answer all the restraining Arguments which bigotted or interested Men make use of at different times and on different occasions, in order to stop the progress of Mens Minds in thinking on this Question, and others of the like nature. It is enough to assign and answer the most plausible one, as well as that which is most frequently urg'd; and to affirm here, That the most zealous of the *Unthinking*, or *Half-thinking*, or *Enemies of Free-Thinking*, are not able to assign any Argument which ought to lay a restraint in this or any other Question whatsoever: for whoever *affirms* that I ought to be restrain'd from thinking, is in virtue of that *Affirmation* oblig'd to assign some Argument or other which ought to lay a restraint upon me.

5thly. I MUST not omit one great Benefit of *Free-Thinking*, of which all past Ages as well as the present may convince us. Free-Thinking is upon experience the only proper means to destroy the Devil's Kingdom among Men; whose Dominion and Power are ever more or less extensive, as Free-Thinking is discourag'd or allow'd: and all other

other means employ'd against him, such as the *casting him out miraculously*, multiplying Priests, and enlarging their Power, and using the temporal Sword, have often increas'd, but never wholly destroy'd his Power.

THUS the Devil is intirely banish'd the United Provinces, where *Free-Thinking* is in the greatest perfection; whereas all round about that *Commonwealth*, he appears in various shapes: sometimes in his own, sometimes in the shape of an old black Gentleman, sometimes in the shape of a dead Man, and sometimes in that of a † Cat. He obsesses some, possesses others, and enters into Confederacy with others. As for instance, he has had from the remotest Antiquity a great Sway in *England*; first, while we were in *Heathen Darkness*, and afterwards a greater during the *thicker Darknes of Popery*. Nor did the *Reformation* do much towards lessening his Power; for great Complaints have been made of the Growth of *Witchcraft*, and the mighty Power of the Devil among us from those *most primitive Times* of our *Holy Church*, viz. about 150 Years ago.

* BISHOP JEWEL, in a *Sermon* before Queen ELIZABETH, told her Ma-

† Vid. *Hertford Trial*. * *Strype's Annals*, p. 7.

jeſty of the marvellous Increase of Witches and Sorcerers within her Realm, and expreſs'd his fears leſt her Majeſty her ſelf ſhould be bewitch'd by them. I pray God, ſays he, they never praſtiſe further than upon the Subject.

HIS Sacred Majeſty King JAMES the Firſt (who was told to his face by the * Archbiſhop of Canterbury, that his Majeſty ſpoke by the ſpecial Aſſiſtance of God's Spirit, and who employ'd his Royal Pen always on Subjects worthy of a Prince, viz. *A Paraphraſe on the Revelation, A Counterblaſt to Tobacco-taking, and † Love-Letters to the Duke of Buckingham*) tells us, || *That the fearful abounding at this time in this Country of theſe deteſtable Slaves of the Devil the Witches and Enchanters, mov'd him to diſpatch in poſt his Treatiſe of Demonology.*

IN the Reign of King CHARLES the Firſt, it ought likewise to be ſuppos'd that many People of the Church were obſeſs'd and poſſeſs'd by the Devil; ſince among the *Articles of Enquiry at a Viſitation of the Dioceſs of London by Biſhop JUXON*, then Lord Treasuſurer of England, one is, *Whether any Miniſter without licence, upon any pretence whatſoever, either of Obſeſſion or Poſſeſſion, caſt out any Devil or Devils.*

* Hampton-Court Conference, p. 96.

† Hiſt. of Engl. vol. 2. in the Life of King James I.

|| Works, p. 91.

I N short, great numbers of Witches have been almost annually executed in *England* from the remotest Antiquity to the late Revolution; when upon the *Liberty* given and taken to *think freely*, the Devil's Power visibly declin'd, and *England* as well as the *United Provinces* ceas'd to be any part of his Christian Territories.

LET the *Priests* give such an Instance of their Success against the Devil any where.

BUT since the *Time* of Dr. SACHEVEREL, when the Clamours against *Free-Thinking* began to be loudest, the Devil has again resum'd his Empire, and appears in the shape of Cats, and enters into confederacy with old Women; and several have been try'd, and many are accus'd, thro all parts of the Kingdom for being Witches. And he seems at present to have so great a Party among us, and so many *Ministers ordain'd* to his Service, and to have render'd *Free-Thinking* so odious; that nothing but the second Coming of our *Blessed Saviour*, which is soon expected by several of our *Reverend Divines* who are well skill'd in the *Prophets* and *Revelation*, gives me any hopes of a Change for the better.

PERHAPS it will be said, *That the Stories of the Devil's Power were founded on the*

the Lyes of some and the Credulity of others; and that the Executions of Witches have been so many Murders: And therefore that there is no pretence to talk of Conquest over the Devil since the Revolution, and nothing to be boasted of by Free-Thinkers. The People were only come a little more to their senses, and by consequence their Tutors were a little fearful of endeavouring to impose on them.

BUT this Objection can be made by very few. *First*, All the ignorant People believe all Stories of this kind to be true. *Secondly*, It is not likely, that they who have so great an Interest in maintaining the Power of the Devil, and have been the principal Promoters of all Prosecutions against Witches, and have branded all Men with *Atheism* who did not agree with them in the Extent of the Power they attributed to the Devil, or refus'd to join with them in the promoting Prosecutions against Witches, should accept of this Apology.

TO those few therefore who make this Objection, I reply, That it is an equal Glory to *Free-Thinkers* to wrest out of the Priests hands the power of taking away so many innocent Peoples Lives and Reputations, which the general Belief of the great Power of the Devil and of the Existence of Witches gave them an opportunity to do, as to drive away the Devil himself. And the good consequence

sequence of *Free-Thinking* to Society, is plainly equal upon this last, as upon the former Supposition.

S E C T. II.

THE Subjects of which Men are deny'd the Right to think by the Enemies of *Free-Thinking*, are of all others those of which Men have not only a *Right to think*, but of which they are oblig'd in duty to think; viz. such as of the *Nature and Attributes of the Eternal Being or God*, of the *Truth and Authority of Books esteem'd Sacred*, and of the *Sense and Meaning of those Books*; or, in one word, of *Religious Questions*.

1st. A RIGHT Opinion in these matters is suppos'd by the *Enemies of Free-Thinking* to be absolutely necessary to Mens Salvation, and some Errors or Mistakes about them are suppos'd to be damnable. Now where a right Opinion is so necessary, there Men have the greatest Concern imaginable to think for themselves, as the best means to take up with the right side of the Question. For if they will not think for themselves, it remains only for them to take the Opinions they have imbib'd from their Grandmothers, Mothers or Priests, or owe to such like Accident, for granted. But
taking

taking that method, they can only be in the right by chance; whereas by Thinking and Examination, they have not only the mere accident of being in the right, but have the Evidence of things to determine them to the side of Truth: unless it be suppos'd that Men are such absurd Animals, that the most unreasonable Opinion is as likely to be admitted for true as the most reasonable, when it is judg'd of by the Reason and Understanding of Men. In that case indeed it will follow, That Men can be under no Obligation to think of these matters. But then it will likewise follow, That they can be under no Obligation to concern themselves about Truth and Falshood in any Opinions. For if Men are so absurd, as not to be able to distinguish between Truth and Falshood, Evidence and no Evidence, what pretence is there for Mens having any Opinions at all? Which yet none judg so necessary as the Enemies of *Free-Thinking*.

2dly. IF the surest and best means of arriving at Truth lies in *Free-Thinking*, then the whole Duty of Man with respect to Opinions lies only in *Free-Thinking*. Because he who *thinks freely* does his best towards being in the right, and consequently does all that God, who can require nothing more of any Man than that he should do his best, can require of him. And should he prove mistaken in any Opinions, he must be as

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acceptable to God as if he receiv'd none but right Opinions. This is admirably express'd by that true Christian and Protestant (and by consequence great *Free-Thinker*) Mr. CHILLINGWORTH, who says, * *That if Men do ther best endeavours to free themselves from all Errors, and yet fail of it thro human Weakness; so well is he persuaded of the Goodness of God, that if in him alone should meet a Confluence of all such Errors of all the Protestants in the World that were thus qualify'd, he should not be so much afraid of them all, as he should be to ask pardon for them. For to ask pardon for such Errors, is tacitly to imply that God is angry with us for them; and that were to impute to him the strange Tyranny of requiring Brick where he gives no Straw; of expecting to gather where he strewed not; to reap where he sowed not; of being offended with us for not doing what he knows we cannot do.*

ON the other side, the whole Crime of Man, with respect to Opinions, must lie in his not *thinking freely*. He who is in the right by accident only, and does but suppose himself to be so without any *Thinking*, is really in a dangerous state, as having taken no pains and used no endeavours towards being in the right, and consequently as having no Merit; nay, as being on the same foot with the most stupid *Papist* and *Hea-*

* *Answ. to Pref. of Charity maint. Sect. 26.*

then. For when once Men refuse or neglect to think, and take up their Opinions upon trust, they do in effect declare they would have been *Papists* or *Heathens*, had they had *Popish* or *Heathen* Priests for their Guides; or *Popish* or *Heathen* Grandmothers to have taught them their Catechisms.

3dly. **SUPERSTITION** is an Evil, which either by the means of Education, or the natural Weakness of Men, oppresses almost all Mankind. And how terrible an Evil it is, is well describ'd by the ancient Philosophers and Poets. TULLY says, * If you give way to Superstition, it will ever haunt and plague you. If you go to a Prophet, or regard Omens; if you sacrifice or observe the Flight of Birds; if you consult an Astrologer or Haruspex; if it thunders or lightens, or any plate is consum'd with Lightning, or such-like Prodigy happens (as it is necessary some such often should) all the Tranquillity of the Mind is destroy'd. And Sleep it self, which seems to be an Asylum and Refuge from all Trouble and Uneasiness, does by the aid of Superstition increase your Troubles and Fears.

* Superstitio enim instat & urget, & quocunque te verteris persequitur: siue tu vatem, siue tu omen audieris; siue immolaris, siue avem aspexeris, siue Chaldaum; si haruspicem videris; si fulserit, si tonuerit, si factum aliquid de cœlo erit, si ostenti simile natum factumve quidpiam: quorum necesse est plerumq; aliquid eveniat: ut nunquam quietâ mente liceat consistere. Perfugium videtur omnium laborum & sollicitudinum esse somnus; at ex ipso plurimæ nascuntur curæ metusque. De Divin. l. 2.

HORACE ranks Superstition with Vice ; and as he makes the Happiness of Man in this Life to consist in the practice of Virtue and Freedom from Superstition, so he makes the greatest Misery of this Life to consist in being vicious and superstitious. * *You are not covetous*, says he, *that's well: But are you as free from all other Vices? Are you free from Ambition, excessive Anger, and the Fear of Death? Are you so much above Superstition, as to laugh at all Dreams, panick Fears, Miracles, Witches, Ghosts, and Prodigies?*

THIS was the state of Superstition among the Ancients ; but since Uncharitableness and damning to all eternity for Trifles, has (in opposition both to Reason and Revelation) come into the World, the Evil of Superstition is much increas'd, and Men are now under greater Terrors and Uneasiness of Mind than they possibly could be when they thought they hazarded less.

NOW there is no just Remedy to this universal Evil but *Free-Thinking*. By that alone can we understand the true Causes of things, and by consequence the Unreasona-

* Non es avarus : abi ; quid ; cætera jam simul isto
Cum vitio fugère ? Caret tibi pectus inani
Ambitione ? Caret mortis formidine & irâ ?
Somnia, terrores magicos, miracula, sagas,
Nocturnos lemures, portentaque Thessala rides ?

bleness of all superstitious Fears. * *Happy is the Man*, says the Divine VIRGIL, *who has discover'd the Causes of Things, and is thereby cured of all kind of Fears, even of Death it self, and all the Noise and Din of Hell.* For by *Free-Thinking* alone Men are capable of knowing, that a perfectly Good, Just, Wise and Powerful Being made and governs the World; and from this Principle they know, that he can require nothing of Men in any Country or Condition of Life, but that whereof he has given them an opportunity of being convinc'd by Evidence and Reason in the Place where they are, and in that Condition of Life to which Birth or any other Chance has directed them; that an honest and rational Man can have no just reason to fear any thing from him: nay, on the contrary, must have so great a Delight and Satisfaction in believing such a Being exists, that he can much better be suppos'd to fear lest no such Being should exist, than to fear any harm from him. And lastly, That God being incapable of having any addition made either to his Power or Happiness, and wanting nothing, can require nothing of Men for his own sake, but only for Man's sake; and consequently, that all Actions and Speculations which are of no use to Mankind, [as for instance, Singing or

* *Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,
Atque metus omnes & inexorable Fatum
Subjecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari.*

Dancing, or wearing of Habits, or Observation of Days, or eating or drinking, or slaughtering of Beasts (in which things the greatest part of the Heathen Worship consisted) or the Belief of *Transubstantiation* or *Consubstantiation*, or of any Doctrines not taught by the *Church of England*] either signify nothing at all with God, or else displease him, but can never render a Man more acceptable to him.

BY means of all this, a Man may possess his Soul in peace, as having an expectation of enjoying all the good things which God can bestow, and no fear of any future Misery or Evil from his hands; and the very word of his State can only be, that he is pleasantly deceiv'd.

WHEREAS superstitious Men are incapable of believing in a perfectly just and good God. They make him talk to all Mankind from corners, and consequently require things of Men under the penalty of Misery in the next World, of which they are incapable of having any convincing Evidence that they are requir'd by him. They make him (who *equally beholds all the Dwellers upon earth*) to have favourite Nations and People, without any Consideration of Merit. They make him put other Nations under Disadvantages without any Demerit. And so they are more properly to be stil'd

Demonists

Demonists than *Theists*. No wonder, therefore if such Men should be so full of Fears of the Wrath of God, that they are sometimes tempted (with the Vicious) to wish there was no God at all; a Thought so unnatural and absurd, that even * *Speculative Atheists* would abhor it. These Men have no quiet in their own Minds; they † rove about in search of *saving Trath* thro the dark Corners of the Earth, and are so foolish as to hope to find it (if I may so say) hid under the Sands of *Africa*, where *Cato* scorn'd to look for it: and neglecting what God speaks plainly to the whole World, take up with what they suppose he has communicated to a few; and thereby believe and practise such things, in which they can never have Satisfaction. For suppose Men take up with a Religion which consists in Dancing or Musick, or such-like Ceremonies, or in useless and unintelligible Speculations; how can they be assur'd they believe and perform as they ought? What Rule can such Men have to know whether other Ceremonies, and useless and unintelligible Speculations, may not be requir'd of them instead of those they perform and believe? And how can they be sure that they believe rightly any unintelligible Speculations? Here is foundation laid for nothing but endless

* *Clark's Sermons at Boyle's Lecture*, vol. 1. p. 6.

† Mr. Selden says, *Men look after Religion, as the Butcher did after his Knife, when he had it in his Mouth.* Table-Talk, p. 162.

Scruples, Doubts, and Fears. Wherefore I conclude, that every one, out of regard to his own Tranquillity of Mind, which must be disturb'd as long as he has any Seeds of Superstition, is oblig'd to *think freely on Matters of Religion.*

4thly. THE infinite number of Pretenders in all Ages to *Revelations* from Heaven, supported by Miracles, containing new Notions of the Deity, new Doctrines, new Commands, new Ceremonies, and new Modes of Worship, make thinking on the foregoing Heads absolutely necessary. For how shall any Man distinguish between the true Messenger from Heaven and the Impostor, but by considering the Evidence produc'd by the one, as *freely* as of the other? Nay, a *Reverend Divine* of our Church not only contends for *Free-Thinking* in this case, but goes further, and says, * *Men are ever to be suspected, when they make extraordinary Pretences.* For, adds he, when Men pretend to work Miracles; and talk of immediate Revelations, of knowing the Truth by Inspiration, and of more than ordinary Illumination; we ought not to be frighted with those big words from looking what is under them, nor to be afraid of calling those things into question, which are set off with such highflown Pretences. From hence it has come to pass, that Superstition and

* Claget's *Persuasive to an ingenuous Trial of Opinions*, p. 19.

Idolatry, Enthusiasms and Impostures, have so much prevail'd in the World. It is somewhat strange, that we should believe Men the more, for that very reason upon which we should believe them the less.

5thly. WE have here in England a Society supported by the Encouragement of her most Excellent Majesty, and the Contributions of many Divines and Ladies of our Establish'd Church, in effect for the Propagation of Free-Thinking in matters of Religion throughout the World ; and whose Design supposes that it is all Mens Duty to *think freely* about matters of Religion. For how can the Society for propagating the Gospel in foreign Parts hope to have any effect on Infidel Nations, without first acquainting them that it is their duty to *think freely* both on the Notions of God and Religion, which they have receiv'd from their Ancestors, or which are *establish'd by Law* among them, and on those new Notions of God and Religion brought to them by the *Missionaries* of the Church of England ? Can it be suppos'd, that our *Missionaries* would begin with telling 'em, that they ought not to *think freely* of their own, or our Religion ; or that after they have by the means of *Free-Thinking* embrac'd our Religion, they ought then to cease from *Free-Thinking* ? This were to proceed very inconsistently in the Work of Conversion, while no other Arms but Reason and Evidence

dence were made use of to convert. On the contrary, every *Missionary* must as a first Principle insist on the Duty of *Free-Thinking*, in order to be hearken'd to by them. Nay, should the *King of Siam* (or any other infidel Prince) in return for the Favour of our Endeavours to convert him and his Kingdom to our Religion, desire to send us some of his *Talapoins* (so the Priests of *Siam* are call'd) to convert us to the Religion by *Law establish'd* in *Siam*; I cannot see but that our *Society for propagating the Gospel*, and all the Contributors and Well-wishers to it, must acknowledg the *King's* Request to be highly reasonable, and perfectly of a-piece with their own Design; and particularly must allow to the *King of Siam*, that it is as much the Duty of the Members of the Church of *England* to *think freely* on what the *Missionary Talapoins* shall propose to them, as it is the Duty of the Members of the Church of *Siam* to *think freely* on what shall be propos'd by the *Missionary Priests* of *England*: And therefore no doubt all they who sincerely desir'd the Conviction of the *Siamese*, would give their *Missionaries* the same Encouragement here, which we expect for ours in *Siam*. The Institution therefore of this *Society* supposes *Free-Thinking* in matters of Religion to be the Duty of all Men on the face of the Earth. And upon that account I cannot sufficiently commend the Design.

AND Oh ! that the proper Persons were but employ'd for the Execution of so glorious a Work ! That such zealous Divines as our ~~SACHS~~—LS, our ~~AT~~—~~BURY~~S, our ~~SMALDGE~~S, our ~~STH~~—BS's, our HIGGINS's, our ~~MILB~~²ARN S, and our SWIFT S, were drawn out annually, as our *military Missionaries* are, to be sent into *foreign Parts to propagate the Gospel* ! (a Service in which such conscientious Men must rejoice, since preaching the Gospel to infidel Nations is no doubt contain'd in *Christ's Commission*, whatever *haranguing upon a Text* among Christians, by some call'd *preaching the Gospel*, may be) we might then hope to see blessed Days, the *Doctrine and Discipline of the Church of England* triumph throughout the World, and Faction cease at home ; as by the means of the others our Arms triumph abroad, and we securely take our rest at night, and travel by day unmolested.

AND no doubt likewise, but it would be as beneficial to the Kingdom of *Siam*, to have a select number annually taken out of their vast Body of *Talapoins*.

6thly. AS there can be no reasonable Change of Opinions among Men, no quitting of any old Religion, no Reception of any new Religion, nor believing any Religion at all, but by means of *Free-Thinking* ;
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to the Holy Scriptures agreeably to Reason, and to the Design of our *Blessed Saviour* of establishing his Religion throughout the whole Universe, imply every where and press in many places the Duty of *Free-Thinking*.

THE Design of the *Gospel* was, by preaching, to set all Men upon *Free-Thinking*, that they might think themselves out of those Notions of God and Religion which were every where *establish'd by Law*, and receive an *unknown God* and, an *unknown Religion* on the Evidence the *Apostles*, or first Messengers, produc'd to convince them. And accordingly the *Apostles* requir'd nothing to be receiv'd on their Authority, without an antecedent Proof given of their Authority. St. PAUL even in his *Epistles*, which are all written to Men who were already *Christians*, offers many Arguments for their Confirmation in the *true Faith*, with respect to all the Parts of the *Christian Religion*. Whereby he made them, and all his Readers for ever Judges of their Force: for whoever reasons, lays aside all Authority, and endeavours to force your Assent by Argument alone. St. PAUL likewise went frequently into the Synagogues of the *Jews*, and *reason'd* with them; which was not only putting the *Jews* upon *Free-Thinking* on matters of Religion, but taking (according to the present Notions of *Christians*) a very extraordinary step to put them upon *Free-Thinking*.

Thinking. For should WILLIAM PENN the *Quaker*, or other religious Person differing from the *Establish'd Church*, come to *St. Paul's* during the time of *Divine Service* to reason with the *Court of Aldermen, Preacher, and Singing-Men*; or Mr. WHISTON into the *Lower House of Convocation*, to reason with them; it is certain, that pursuant to the false Notions which now universally prevail, the one would be treated as a *Madman* and *Fanatick*, and the other as a *Disturber of the Proceedings of the Holy Synod*, which assumes a right to determine without Reasoning with the Person whose Opinions they condemn.

OUR Saviour particularly commands us to search the *Scriptures*, that is, to endeavour to find out their true meaning. And for fear we should surrender our Judgments to our Fathers, and Mothers, or Church-Rulers, or Preachers, he bids us take heed what we hear, and whom we hear, and to beware of their Doctrine. And, why, says he, even of your selves judg ye not what is right? If a Man come to me, and hate not his Father and Mother, he cannot be my Disciple. And he commanded his own Disciples not to be call'd Rabbi nor Masters; by which last words our learned Commentator, the Reverend * Dr. WHITEY, understands, That we should call no Man Guide, or Master upon Earth, no Fa-

thers, no Church, no Council. And indeed whoever considers, that all the Priests upon earth were Enemies to our *Blessed Saviour* and his Gospel, and that he, giving the Privilege of *Infallibility* to no body besides his holy Apostles, could not be secure that any Priests would ever be otherwise; I say, he who considers this, can never think it possible for CHRIST to give so partial a Command, as to contain a Reserve in behalf of any Set of Priests, in prejudice of the general Rules of *Free-Thinking*, on which the Gospel was to be built, and which he so particularly laid down and inculcated.

7thly. THE Conduct of the Priests, who are the chief Pretenders to be Guides to others in matters of Religion, makes *Free-Thinking* on the Nature and Attributes of the Eternal Being or God, on the Authority of Scriptures, and on the Sense of Scriptures, unavoidable. And to prove this, I will give you an Induction of several Particulars of their Conduct.

1st. IT is well known that the Priests throughout the Universe are endlessly divided in Opinion about all these Matters; and their variety of Opinion is so great, as not possibly to be collected together; nay, even those kinds of Priests, with which we are more nearly concern'd, differ so much one among another on some of these Heads, that it would be an impossible Task to give you all

all their Differences. I will therefore out of this vast and spacious Field select such under each of these Heads, as is most proper to affect us *Englishmen*.

(I.) AS to the *Nature of the Eternal Being or God*, the ancient and modern Pagan Priests had and have as many different Ideas of the Deity, as Wit, or Interest, or Folly can invent; and even the Christian Priests have been always, and still are, divided in their Notions of a Deity. Almost all the ancient Priests and Fathers (who were most of them Priests) of the Christian Church conceiv'd * God to be material; and several ancient *Christian Priests of Egypt* were so gross, as to conceive him to be in the shape of Man, and from thence were call'd *Anthropomorphites*. Most of the modern Priests contend that God is *immaterial*, but they differ in their Notion of *Immateriality*; some by *Immaterial Being* under-

* Quis enim negabit, *says Tertullian*, Deum corpus esse etsi spiritus est? Spiritus enim corpus sui generis in sua effigie. Sed et invisibilia illa, quæcunq; sunt, habent apud Deum et suum corpus et suam formam, per quæ soli Deo visibilia sunt; quanto magis quod ex ipsius substantiâ missum est sine substantiâ non erit? *Cap. 7. cont. Praxeam.* By which Passage the Reader may see that Spiritus and Invisibilis had not the same sense among the Fathers which they have among the modern Divines and Philosophers, but were Words apply'd to that kind of Matter of which God and the Souls of Men consisted, in opposition to that gross Matter, of which the Earth or our Bodies consisted: And consequently that the Fathers maintain'd God to be material, when they us'd Words which now signify quite the contrary.

standing

standing * *extended Substance without Solidity; and † others by Immaterial Being understanding unextended Being.*

IF any regard is to be had to the malicious Books and Sayings of Priests one against another, several of them make the *material Universe to be the Eternal Being or God*, wherein consists the *Essence of Atheism*.

THE Reverend || Mr. WILLIAM CARROL has wrote several Books to prove the Reverend Dr. CLARK and the Reverend Mr. SAMUEL BOLD *Atheists* in that sense.

THE Reverend ** Mr. TURNER charges the Reverend Dr. CUDWORTH with Atheism for his *Intellectual System of the Universe*: And a Great Prelate must suppose *Atheism* very far spread among the Priests, when he said, †† *It was a great Providence of God that so many of the Clergy swore to the Government* (under King WILLIAM and

* Dr. More in his *Div. Dial. and Enchirid. Metaph. Glanvil in Sadd. Triumph. Turner of the Divine Extension, in an Appendix to his Disc. of the Messiah; and Dr. Clark in his Four Letters about the Immateriality of the Soul.*

† *The Body of Priests.*

|| Remarks on *Clark's Sermons*, 4to. Defence of Remarks, 4to. Dissertation against *Locke*, 8vo.

** *Disc. of the Messiah, Epist. Ded. p. 17, 18.*

†† Notes on the Pastoral Letter, p. 51.

Queen MARY) lest the Church should be destroy'd: And it was the same Providence of God, that so many of the Clergy refus'd the Oath, lest People should think that there was no such thing as Religion, and incline to Atheism!

AS the *Christian Priests* differ about the *Nature or Essence of God*, so they are infinitely more divided in their *Notions* about his *Attributes*.

THE whole difference between the *Arminians* and *Calvinists* is founded on different *Notions* of the *Attributes of God*; and this Dispute is kept up in most *Christian Churches* on the face of the earth. It is carry'd on in the *Romish Church* under the names of *Jansenists* and *Jesuits*, *Thomists* and *Molinists*, &c. It has been for near a Century last past debated among the *Divines* of our Church, and is at this day between the Reverend Dr. WHITBY and his Adversaries. Indeed the Differences among the *Priests* in every Church about the *Attributes of God*, are as numerous as the *Priests* who treat of the *Divine Attributes*; not one agreeing with another in his *Notions* of them all. I will therefore close this matter with one Instance of a most remarkable Difference.

IT is the Opinion of many Divines, That when the Scriptures attribute Hands, and Eyes, and Feet, and Face to God, we are not to understand that God really has those parts, but only that he has a power to execute all those Actions, to the effecting of which those parts are necessary in us. And when the Scriptures attribute such Passions to God, as Anger, Pleasure, Love, Hatred, Repentance, Revenge, and the like; the meaning is, that he will as certainly punish the Wicked, as if he was inflam'd with the Passion of Anger; that he will as infallibly reward the Good, as if he had a love for them; and that when Men turn from their Wickedness, he will suit Dispensations to them, as if he really repented or chang'd his Mind: So that these Scripture-Attributes belong not to God in a proper and just Sense, but only improperly, or as the Schools speak, *analogically*. But when the Scripture attributes to God an Understanding, Wisdom, Will, Goodness, Holiness, Justice and Truth, these words are to be understood strictly and properly, or in their common Sense. Dr. TILLOTSON, the late Archbishop of *Canterbury*, throughout his Works maintains this System of the Deity. I need only cite his words with respect to those Attributes last mention'd; his Notions, with respect to Parts or Passions in God, being sufficiently known without any proof.

proof. He says, * *It is foolish for any Man to pretend he cannot know what Justice, and Goodness, and Truth in God are; for if we do not know this, it is all one to us whether God be good or not: nor could we imitate his Goodness; for he that imitates, endeavours to make himself like something that he knows, and must of necessity have some Idea of that to which he aims to be like. So that if we had no certain and settled Notion of the Goodness, and Justice, and Truth of God, he would be altogether an unintelligible Being; and Religion, which consists in the Imitation of him, would be utterly lost. Thus that Religious and Free-Thinking Prelate. But on the other side, Dr. KING the present Archbishop of Dublin tells us, † That the best Representations we can make of God, are infinitely short of Truth; That Wisdom, Understanding, and Mercy, P. 7, 8. Foreknowledg, Predestination, and Will, when ascrib'd to God, are not to be taken properly. Again, That Justice and Virtue (and by P. 34, 35. consequence all the moral Attributes of God) are not to be understood to signify the same thing when apply'd to God and Man; and that they are of so different a nature from what they are in us, and so superiour to all that we can conceive, that there is no more likeness between them, than between our Hand and God's Power. But all these Attributes, according*

* Sermons, vol. 6. p. 15, 16.

† Sermon on Divine Predest. p. 16.

P. 6.

to his *Grace*, are to be understood in the same manner, as when Men ascribe *Hands, and Eyes, and Feet to God*; or as when Men ascribe *Anger, Love, Hatred, Revenge, Repentance, changing Resolutions, and in the same improper Analogical Sense*. So that as his *Grace of Canterbury* would define God to be a *Being without Parts and Passions, Holy, Wise, Just, True, and Good*; his *Grace of Dublin* must on the contrary define God to be a *Being not only without Parts and Passions, but without Understanding, Wisdom, Will, Mercy, Holiness, Goodness, or Truth*.

2dly. THE Priests throughout the World differ about Scriptures, and the Authority of Scriptures. The * *Bramins* have a Book of Scripture call'd the *Shaster*. The *Persees* have their *Zundavastaw*. The *Bonzes* of *China* have Books written by the † *Disciples of FO-HE*, whom they call the || *God and Saviour of the World, who was born to teach the way of Salvation, and to give satisfaction for all Mens Sins*. The *Talapoins* of *Siam* have a Book of Scripture written by †† *SOMMONOCODOM*, who, the *Siamese*

* Lord's Religion of the Banians and Persees.

† Navarette's *Voyages*, p. 86.

|| Salvator Generis Humani. *Conf. Sin. Phil. Proem. Diff.* p. 28.

Le Dieu Fo-he a été le Sauveur du monde. Il est né pour enseigner le voye du Salut, & pour expier pour tous les Pechez. *Le Compte*, vol. 2. p. 132.

†† Tachard *Voyage au Siam*, vol. 1. p. 408.

say, was * *born of a Virgin*, and was † *the God expected by the Universe*. The *Dervizes* have their *Alchoran*. The *Rabbi's* among the *Samaritans*, who now live at *Sichem* in *Palestine*, receive the *five Books of MOSES* (the Copy whereof is very different from ours) as their Scripture; together with a *Chronicon*, or History of themselves from *MOSES's* time, quite different from that contain'd in the *Historical Books of the Old Testament*. This || *Chronicon* is lodg'd in the publick Library of *Leyden*, and has never been publish'd in print. The *Rabbi's* among the common Herd of *Jews* receive for Scripture the *four and twenty Books* of the *Old Testament*. The *Priests* of the *Roman Church*, of the *English* and other *Protestant Churches*, receive for Scripture the *four and twenty Books* of the *Old Testament*, and all the *Books of the New Testament*: but the *Roman* receives several other *Books*, call'd *Apocrypha*, as *Cananical*, which all the *Protestant Churches* utterly reject, except the *Church of England*; which, differently from all other *Christian Churches*, receives them as *half Cananical*, reading some parts of them in their Churches, and thereby excluding some Chapters of *Canonical Scripture* from being read.

* Vol. 2. p. 253.

† Le Dieu attendu de l'univers. *Ib.* p. 254, 255.

|| Relandi Differ. vol. 2. p. 16.

I MUST observe, That the *Priests* of all Christian Churches differ among themselves in each Church about the Copies of the same *Books of Scripture*; some reading them according to one Manuscript, and others according to another. But the great Dispute of all, is concerning the *Hebrew* and *Septuagint*, between which two there is a great difference; (the latter making the World 1500 Years older than the former :) to name no other Differences of greater or less importance.

LASTLY, As the most ancient Christian Churches and Priests receiv'd several *Gospels* and *Books of Scripture* which are now lost, such as * *the Gospel according to the Hebrews*, *the Gospel according to the Egyptians*, *the Traditions of Matthias*, &c. and as not one Father in the two first Centuries (whose Works now remain) but receiv'd Books of Scripture, which are either lost to us, or that we reject as *Apocryphal*: so the several Sects of Christians in the *East* and in *Africa* receive at this day *some Books of Scripture*, which are so far lost to us, that we know only their Names, and others which we have and reject. As for instance, the Reverend Dr. GRABE tells us of a Book receiv'd by the † *Copticks*, call'd the *Secrets*

* Millii Proleg. in Nov. Test. p. 5, 6, 7.

† Spicileg. Secul. 1. p. 73.

of PETER, of which we have no Copy; and * LUDOLPHUS tells us, That the *Abyssinian Christians receive the Apostolick Constitutions*; and || POSTELLUS brought from the East, where it was in use, the *Gospel of JAMES*: both which we reject as *Apocryphal*.

THE same Books of Scripture have, among those Priests who receive them, a very different degree of Authority; some attributing more, and others less Authority to them.

THE Popish Priests contend that the Text of Scripture is so corrupted, precarious, and unintelligible, that we are to depend on the Authority of their Church for the true Particulars of the Christian Religion. Others who contend for a greater Perfection in the Text of Scripture, differ about the Inspiration of those Books; some contending that every Thought and Word are inspir'd; some that the Thoughts are inspir'd, and not the Words; some that those Thoughts only are inspir'd, which relate to Fundamentals; and others that the Books were written by honest Men with great Care and Faithfulness, without any Inspiration either with respect to the Thoughts or Words.

* Hist. Æthiop. l. 3. c. 4. §. 27.

|| Fabricii Codex Apocr. p. 48.

IN like manner, the *Bramins, Persees, Bonzes, Talapoins, Dervizes, Rabbi's*, and all other *Priests* who build their Religion on Books, must from the nature of things vary about Books in the same Religion, about the Inspiration, and Copies of those Books.

3dly. THE *Priests* differ about the Sense and Meaning of those Books they receive as Sacred. This is evident from the great number of *Sects* in each Religion, founded on the Diversity of Senses put on their several Scriptures. And tho the Books of the *Old and New Testament* are the immediate Dictates of God himself, and all other *Scriptures* are the Books of Impostors; yet are the *Priests* of the Christian Church (like the *Priests* of all other Churches) not only divided into numberless *Sects*, on account of their different Interpretations of *them*, but even the *Priests* of the same *Sect* differ endlessly in Opinion about their Sense and Meaning.

TO set this matter before you in the clearest manner; and to possess you with the justest Idea of the Differences among *Priests* about the Sense and Meaning of their Scriptures, and to make my Argument the stronger for the *Duty* and *Necessity* of *Free-Thinking*; I will confine my self to the *most Divine* of all Books, and by consequence the best

best adapted of any to prevent Diversity of Opinions; and will take the following method.

First, I WILL give you an Idea of the Nature of our Holy Books; whereby you'll see the Foundation therein laid for a Diversity of Opinions among the Priests of the Christian Church.

AND, *Secondly*, I will give you a Specimen of the Diversity of Opinions among the Priests of the Church of *England*, pretended to be deduc'd from them: for all *their* Differences are too great to be enumerated. From whence you'll easily infer, that there must be an infinite number of Opinions among all other sorts of Priests, as to the Meaning of their Scriptures; since the *most Divine* of all *Books* lays such a foundation for difference of Opinion, that Priests of the same Sect are not able to agree, tho' neither Art, nor Force, nor Interest are wanting to compel them to an Agreement in Opinion.

First, AS to an Idea of the Nature of our Holy Books, I will not pretend to so much divine Knowledg as to draw their Character my self; and therefore take the following account of them from the Right Reverend Bishop TAYLOR, a *Prelate* well known for his learned Defence of the *Divine Right of Episcopacy*, his *Life of the Blessed*
JESUS,

JESUS, and many Books of Devotion; as likewise for his Suffering for the Church of England and Royal Family, during the late Civil Wars. This Religious Prelate tells us,

* 1. *THAT* there are innumerable places of the Scriptures containing in them great Mysteries, but yet are so enwrap'd in a Cloud, or so darken'd with Umbrages, or heighten'd with Expressions, or so cover'd with Allegories and Garments of Rhetorick, so profound in the Matter, or so intricate in the Manner, in the Clothing and the Dressing; that God may seem to have left them as Trials of our Industry, and Arguments of our Imperfections, and as Occasions of our Charity and Toleration to each other, and Humility in our selves, rather than as Repositories of Faith, and Furniture of Creeds and Articles of Belief.

966.

2. HE says, That there are so many thousand Copies of the Scriptures, which were writ by Persons of different Interests and Persuasions, such different Understandings and Tempers, such distinct Abilities and Weaknesses; that there is great Variety of Readings, both in the Old and New Testament.

967.

3. *THAT* there are many places of Scripture which have a double Sense, a Literal and a Spiritual. And both these Senses are subdivided: For the Literal Sense is natural or figu-

rative; and the Spiritual is sometimes allegorical, sometimes anagogical; nay, sometimes there are divers literal Senses in the same Sentence.

4. THAT there are divers places of Scripture P. 969. containing in them great Mysteries, and Questions of great Concernment; and yet the Fabrick and Constitution of them is such, that there is no certain Mark to determine whether the Sense of them should be literal or figurative.

5. THAT there are some places of Scripture which have the self-same Expressions, the same perceptive Words, the same Reason and Account in all appearance; and yet must be expounded to quite different Senses.

6. THAT some Points of Scripture are P. 970. so mysterious, that they are only to be understood by Persons very Holy and Spiritual.

7. THAT all Systems of Science are so express'd, that either by reason of the Universality of the Terms and subject Matter, or by the infinite Variety of human Understandings, they seem to divers Men, nay to the same Men upon different Occasions, to speak things extremely disparate, and sometimes contrary, but very often of great variety. And this very thing happens also in Scripture, that if it were not in re seria & sacra, it were excellent sport
to

to observe how the same place of Scripture serves several turns upon occasion.

8. THAT the Scriptures are so wrote, as not certainly to be understood by considering the Context and Connexion of the Parts. For when there are two or three Antecedents and Subjects spoken of, what Rule shall ascertain me that I make my reference true, by drawing the Relation to such an Antecedent? For in a Contexture where one part does not always depend upon another, where things of different natures intervene and interrupt the first Intentions; there expounding Scripture by the Context is not always a very probable method to find out the true Meaning.

9. THAT comparing of Places is another great Pretence to fix the Sense of Scripture; but comparing of Places is of so indefinite Capacity, that if there be Ambiguity of Words, Variety of Sense, Alteration of Circumstances, or Difference of Stile among Divine Writers, then there is nothing that may be more abus'd by wilful People, or may more easily deceive the Unwary, or that may more amuse the most intelligent Observer.

10. THAT Scriptures are pretended to be expounded by Analogy of Reason. But unless there were some Intellectus Universalis furnish'd with infallible Propositions, by referring to which, every one might argue infallibly; this Logick may deceive as well as any of the rest.

rest. For it is with Mens Reason as with Mens Tastes, &c.

11. THAT others pretend to expound P. 973. *Scripture by the Analogy of Faith. But that is a Chimera, a thing in nubibus, which varies like the right hand and left hand of a Pillar.*

12. LASTLY, That consulting Originals is thought a great matter in the Interpretation of Scripture. But the difficulty is in the Thing however express'd, the least in the Language. The Inspection of the Original is no more certain way of Interpretation now, than it was in the primitive Ages of the Church, when there was an infinite Variety of Translations of the Bible, and never a one like another.

2dly. I NOW proceed to give a Specimen of the Diversity of Opinions of the Priests of the Church of England, all pretended to be deduc'd from the Scriptures.

1. THE most fundamental Doctrine of the whole Christian Religion, is the Doctrine of the Ever-blessed Trinity: And yet what different Notions of the Trinity do the Priests pretend to deduce from Scripture?

SOME make the Orthodox Doctrine to consist in * three distinct, eternal, perfectly

* Braddock's Doctrine of the Fathers, &c. part 1.

equal Beings, agreeing in a specifick Unity; in conformity with the Orthodox Priests of the fourth Century, and particularly St. ATHANASIUS, who says, (a) The Persons of the Trinity are one God, as PETER, PAUL, and TIMOTHY are one Man. i. e. 3 men

SOME (b) maintain *three distinct, eternal, equal Beings, whose Unity is partly numerical and partly specifical.* { *is but 1. & 1. in 3.* }

SOME (c) maintain *three distinct, eternal, unequal Beings, the first whereof is alone self-existent, and the second and third subordinate.*

AND these again are subdivided; some of them making the *Son* and *Holy Ghost* to flow from the Father by an inherent Necessity of Nature, and others to be the Effect of a voluntary Operation of the Father.

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SOME (d) make the Persons to be *eternal Modes of Subsistence, or internal Relations of the one Substance of the Deity to it self.* And pursuant to this Hypothesis,

(a) Athanasii Opera. Ed. Par. vol. 2. p. 160.

(b) Sherlock's Vind. of the Trinity, and its Defence.

(c) Fowler's 28 Propos. Bulli Defens. Fid. Nic. Cudworth's Intell. Syft. Payne's Sermons, and Letter to the Bishop of Roch. And Dr. Clarke's Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity.

(d) Dr. South's Animad. and Tritheism charg'd.

they

they say, (a) *That the whole Deity was incarnate in the Man Christ, but not wholly.*

SOME (b) make the Persons to be external Relations of the one Substance of the Deity to Mankind, viz. Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier; as King WILLIAM was King of England, France and Ireland. Again, the same Reverend Person makes each Person a Third of God, as (c) Length, Breadth, and Thickness make a Cube; or as (d) three Groats make a Shilling, and three Nobles make a Pound. 2. *is the Coin of other Countries than Orthodox?*

SOME (e) make the Trinity to consist in a Mind that from all Eternity had Wisdom, that from all Eternity understood himself, and from all Eternity loved himself. *a Stranger God self!*

Lastly, OTHERS (f) receive the words of the Athanasian Creed without any Sense or Explication at all, conceiving the Article of Faith to lie in something unintelligible. *Faith is Athanasian certainly does so.*

2: THE Priests dispute, *Whether the Doctrine of the Trinity be a Fundamental and necessary Article of the Christian Faith or no.*

(a) South's Tritheism charg'd, p. 62.

(b) Wallis's Letters of the Trinity. Lett. 3. p. 40, 41.

(c) First Lett. p. 11.

(d) Third Lett. p. 42.

(e) Nye's Institutions of the Trinity.

(f) Gasirel's Confid. on the Trinity.

Dr. SOUTH affirms, (a) *A Man can no more be a Christian without the Belief of the Trinity, than he can be a Man without a rational Soul.* And our Right Reverend Bishop (b) BULL has wrote a Book against EPISCOPIUS and others, to prove the *Necessity of believing the Trinity and Incarnation.* Indeed the greater number of Priests are in that Sentiment. For as the Right Reverend (c) Bishop TAYLOR observes, *The Example of so excellent a Man as ATHANASIUS in his Creed, has been follow'd with too much Greediness; all the World in Factions, all damning one another, each Party damn'd by all the rest; and there is no Disagreement in Opinion, but Damnation presently to all who disagree.*

P. 963. BUT this Religious Prelate is not himself of that opinion. He says, *If it be consider'd how many People understand not the Athanasian Creed, how contrary to natural Reason it seems, how little the Scripture says of those Curiosities of Explication, how Tradition is not clear on ATHANASIUS's side for the Article it self, how ATHANASIUS is put to it to make an Answer and Excuse for the Fathers who express'd themselves like Arians, how the Arians appeal'd to the Fathers for Trial,*

(a) Ded. Epif. to Trith. charg'd.

(b) De Necessit. credendi, &c.

(c) Polemick Works, p. 964.

and the Offer was declin'd; it had not been amiss if the final Judgment had been left to Christ, who is appointed Judg of all Men, and who will judg them righteously; for he knows every Truth, the Degree of every Necessity, and all Excuses that do lessen the nature and malice of a Sin: all which ATHANASIUS, tho a very good Man, did not know so well as to warrant such a Sentence. And Bishop TAYLOR concludes, That it is very strange to put Uncharitableness into a Creed, and make it an Article of Faith.

Dr. WALLIS takes a different method from Bishop TAYLOR, tho he agrees with him in his Conclusion. He says, * *The damnatory Sentences in the Athanasian Creed are not to be understood according to the Rigour. What do they there then?*

AND many other Divines contend, that the damnatory Sentences are no part of the Creed, which consists only in believing the Article of the Trinity as there express'd.

3. The † Priests of our Church dispute, Whether at the Resurrection Men shall have a Body consisting of the same numerical Particles of Matter that were laid in the Grave: Whether they shall have a Body consisting of the same numerical Particles of Matter that have been some time

* Second Letter, p. 2.

† See their numerous Sermons on Easter-Day.

or other vitally united to the Soul during the Life of the Man: Whether they shall have a Body consisting of Particles of Matter that were never united to the Soul during the Life of the Man: Whether they shall not have a Body consisting of any Particles of Matter indifferently: and lastly, Whether they shall rise with any Body or no.

4. OUR Priests at, and for many years after the Reformation, were generally *Calvinists* or *Predestinarians*, as is evident from the * *Articles of the Church*; from the † *Bibles* printed in Queen ELIZABETH's time, to which are often annex'd an *Apology for Predestination, answering the common Objections* made by *Atheists, Deists, Socinians* and *Libertines*, against that saving Doctrine of the Gospel; from the ‖ *Suffrage of the Divines of Great Britain deliver'd by them to the Synod of Dort, March 16. 1619.* as the *Sense of the Church of England*; where the *five Points* (as they are call'd) are all determin'd on the *Calvinistical* side, agreeable to the Decisions of that *Holy Synod*: and lastly, from all their Books till the time of Bishop LAUD. In which time was made the grand Change among our Priests; and there are now at least nine parts in ten of the Priests

* Art. 10. & 17.

† In several Editions printed by C. Barker the Queen's Printer.

‖ Printed in Eng. anno 1629. 4to. and in the Acta Dor-dracensia.

who preach every Sunday contrary to the }
Articles they have subscrib'd. So true are
 the Observations of Bishop TAYLOR and
 Mr. WHISTON; the first whereof says,
 * *That there is no Church which is in Prospe-*
riety, but alters her Doctrine every Age, either
by bringing in new Doctrines or contradicting
the old; which shows that none are satisfy'd
with themselves or with their own Confessions:
 And the latter, † *That there is scarce any one*
Clergyman of the Church that has consider'd
and examin'd things with care, who believes all
the Thirty nine Articles, in their proper and
original Meaning. However, the Ortho-
 doxy of Queen ELIZABETH's time is not
 quite extinguish'd. We have had our PRI-
 DEAUX's and our JANE's, both Professors
 of the Divinity Chair in Oxford; our
 CARLTONS and our DAVENANTS
 both Bishops; and have now our SOUTHS
 and our EDWARDS's of Oxford and Cam-
 bridge; and several others who appear in be-
 half of our old Religion against the nume-
 rous Innovators among the Clergy. The
 two last mention'd Divines have with great
 Vigour (but it must be confess'd very weak-
 ly) lately attack'd the Reverend Dr. WHIT-
 BY, who in many late Books has show'd
 himself a zealous Arminian. I must not
 omit doing justice to that Profound and Or-
 thodox Prelate the present Bishop of London, Compton.

* Ded. before Liberty of Prophecyning.

† Essays, p. 238.

whom many have often heard with satisfaction inculcate the *Doctrine of Predestination* in his excellent Sermons.

5. OUR Priests dispute whether *Hell-Torments are eternal* or no ; and some of the most eminent either doubt of their *Eternity*, or deny them to be *Eternal*. The famous Divine and Philosopher * Dr. HENRY MORE says, The words ΑΙΩΝ and ΑΙΩΝΙΟ in Scripture are indifferent to signify either that which is properly everlasting, or that which lasts a long time ; so that we are not able to pronounce for the Eternity or Perpetuity of Hell-Torments. Again, That Comminations are not, tho Promises be obligatory ; forasmuch as in Comminations the Comminator is the Creditor, and he that is menaced the Debtor that owes the Punishment ; but in Promises he that promises becomes the Debtor, and he to whom the Promise is made, Creditor. Whence the Promiser is plainly oblig'd to make good his Promise, as being the Debtor : But the Comminator, as being the Creditor, is not oblig'd to exact the Punishment ; it being in the power of any Creditor to remit the Debt owing to him if he will. Wherefore in this Commination of eternal Fire or everlasting Punishment, tho ΑΙΩΝΙΟ signify here properly everlasting, as well as in everlasting Lite, yet because this latter is a Promise, and the other only a Commination, it does not follow, that as surely as the

* Annotations on Lux Orientalis, p. 73, 74.

Righteous shall be rewarded with everlasting Life, so surely shall the Wicked be punish'd with everlasting Fire in the most proper and highest Extent of the Signification of the word. Because God in his Comminations to the Wicked is only a Creditor, and has still a right and power to remit either part or the whole Debt; but to the Righteous, by virtue of his Promise, he becomes a Debtor, and cannot recede, but must punctually keep his Word.

TO the same purpose and after the same manner speaks the most Pious and Rational of all Priests, Dr. TILLOTSON, in his celebrated Sermon of *Hell-Torments*. And Dr. HICKES mentions * five or six Divines, most of whom are in great Stations of the Church, as Converts to this Opinion by a Manuscript Treatise written by an old Sceptick (so he calls the Reverend Mr. WHITE-FOOT) at Norwich.

6. OUR Priests dispute whether the Sabbath or the Lord's-Day ought to be kept holy.

FROM the Reformation to the Reign of King JAMES I. England was as remarkable for its religious Observation of the Lord's-Day, as Scotland is at this day. And I can meet with no publick remarkable Instance of the Breach of that Holy Day, de-

* Discourses on Tillotson and Burnet, p. 46.

ring the long Reign of Queen ELIZABETH, unless at * AYLMER the Bishop of London's House in Fulham, where his Lordship and others (I suppose his Chaplains) used to play at Bowls on Sunday. But King JAMES publish'd a *Proclamation* for Sports on that Holy Day, obliging all Ministers to read it in their Churches. And † several Priests in his Reign, and that of his Successor CHARLES I. (whether in compliance with the Profaneness of the Court, I shall not determine) wrote Books to shew that *Sunday was no Sabbath*, and that there was no *Morality* in observing the Lord's-Day: all which were answer'd and refuted by several other Godly and Orthodox Divines. Nor is this Controversy yet bury'd; for very lately a High and Reverend || Priest has wrote for the Lawfulness of Sports on that Holy Day.

7. OUR Priests dispute whether *Episcopacy* be of Divine or Human Institution; a *Question* which, according to most of them, concerns the very Essence of the Church.

THAT the latter was the Opinion of our Church (and of course once the Opinion of many Priests) from the Reformation to the Restoration of King CHARLES II. is evident; for as a Noble Peer observ'd in

* *Strype's Life of Aymer*, p. 215, 294.

† Pridcaux, Brerewood, White, Heylin, Dowe, Pocklington, Mede, &c.

|| *Morer on the Name, Notion, &c. of the Sabbath.*

a * *Speech made in the House of Lords, Presbyterian Ordination was allow'd and practis'd in the Church from the Beginning of the Reformation till the Act of Uniformity (which allow'd of no Ordination but Episcopal) and several Bishops were made of such as were never ordain'd Priests by Bishops. But yet some † few Priests before the Restoration, and more since, have wrote for the Divine Right of Episcopacy; and 'tis now become a considerable Squabble in the Church. There are not only Priests on both sides of the Question, but one eminent Priest, Dr. STIL-
LINGFLEET, is himself on both sides: when he was a *Presbyter*, he wrote a || *Book to prove the human Institution of Episcopacy*; and when he was a *Bishop*, he (a) wrote to prove it of *Divine Institution*: just like AYLMER Bishop of London, who before he was made Bishop thought (b) *the Lands of the Clergy ought to be given to Queen ELIZABETH to maintain her Wars against France and Spain*; but when he was a Bishop, he apply'd to himself these words, *When I was a Child, I spake as a Child, I thought as a Child.**

8. THE Doctrine of *Original Sin*, and whether Men are now liable to be damn'd }

* State-Tracts, p. 50.

† Bishops Hall and Taylor, &c.

|| Irenicum.

(a) Charge to his Clergy, in 1690.

(b) Aylmer's Life by Strype, p. 225, 268, 269.

AB { for ADAM's Sin (which is the Foundation of the whole Christian Religion) was formerly disputed between * Bishop TAYLOR and the Bishop of Rochester, and is at this day between the Reverend Dr. WHITBY and the Reverend Dr. EDWARDS of Jesus-College in Oxford.

9. WHETHER our Saviour's Soul existed in Heaven before his Incarnation, was lately debated between Dr. FOWLER, the present Bishop of Gloucester, and Dr. SHERLOCK, who have each of them had other Priests for their Seconds.

10. LAY-BAPTISM was expressly allow'd of in the Rubrick of our Liturgy, just before the Office of private Baptism, till JAMES I's Reign, in these words: *Let those that are present at the Baptism call upon God, and say the Lord's Prayer if the time will suffer. And then one of them shall name the Child, and dip him in the Water, or pour water upon him, saying in these Words, I baptize thee, &c.* And as far as my Knowledge in the Priests Books reaches, the Validity of Lay-Baptism was a settled Point among the best Churchmen till very lately. For I find the Reverend Mr. SELLERS (who was so high a Churchman as to be a Jacobite Separatist) affirming, † *That the Baptism administer'd in*

* Polemick Works, p. 863.

† Remarks on J. H's View of Antiquity, p. 380, 381.

sport by *ATHANASIUS*, when he was a *Heathen School-Boy*, to his *Heathen Playfellows*, was valid and not to be reiterated, as was defin'd by *ALEXANDER* then Patriarch of *Alexandria*, and oppos'd by no other part of the Church. But of late many Censures have been pass'd on the Bishop of *Sarum*, and Books written against him by Priests, for asserting, * *That Faith in the Trinity gives every Man a right to Baptism; and that this has been the constant Sense of the Church for above 1400 Years: which in a ritual matter is certainly of great Authority. They reckon'd that Baptism was the Gift of Christ to his Church, when given in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. It is Christ's Baptism, be they who give it Orthodox or Hereticks, Clergy or Laity; and in the latter Ages, Men or Women.*

II. THE Reverend Mr. *BLAXTON* has collected the † *Opinions of the most Learned and Famous Divines of the Church of England from the Reformation to the Year 1634. all condemning Usury as unlawful and forbidden by God's Word. To which I could add a great many more who have follow'd our primitive Clergy in this point, and easily make Mr. BLAXTON's Book, as big as the History of Passive-Obedience. I will only throw in the Opinion of that great Casuist*

* Two Sermons printed in 1710.

† Printed anno 1634.

and profound Divine Bishop SANDERSON, who makes ** Six in the Hundred to be Sabbath-breaking, and every one that takes lawful Interest for his Mony to be guilty of the Breach of all the ten Commandments; and particularly of the fourth, because the Plough goes on Sundays.* And even our Lay Ancestors had their Heads so turn'd by the Sermons and Books of the Priests on that Subject, that in an *Act of Parliament* made in the 13th Year of *Q. Elizabeth* to reduce Interest to ten per cent. is asserted; *That all Usury being forbidden by the Law of God is Sin and detestable:* And in another *Act* made the 21st of *James I.* to reduce Interest to eight per cent. there are these words at the end of the said *Act*, viz. *Provided, That no words in this Law contain'd shall be construed or expounded to allow the Practice of Usury in point of Religion or Conscience.* But our Priests are now almost universally chang'd in this matter. And I have not heard of any one of late, except the Reverend Mr. DAVID JONES, who takes Usury to be a Sin. On the contrary, it ought to be suppos'd that they now account it a Christian Vertue, since there are so many among 'em who are *common Stockjobbers on the Change,* and who act the part of *Attorneys and Scriveners* in their Parishes, in placing out Mony on Securities at Interest.

* Notes on the Pastoral Letter, p. 44.

12. THEY dispute whether Men are to be of the *Priests Religion*, or the *Magistrates*, or are to *judg for themselves*. In the Reign of CHARLES II. (that King after their own heart) their Leader Dr. PARKER said, ** That in Cases and Disputes of a publick Concern, private Men have no power over their own Actions, they are not to be directed by their own Judgments, or determin'd by their own Wills; but by the Commands and Determinations of the publick Conscience or Magistrate. And if there is any Sin in the Command, he that impos'd it shall answer for't.* Again, *That in all disputable Cases it is better to err with Authority, that is, with the Magistrates, than to be in the right against it.* But since the Magistrate has laid aside all Claim to Dominion over Mens Minds and Consciences, by ceasing to fine and imprison Men on the score of Religion, and by granting a Toleration; they † now set up the *Authority of the Priest* (which they call the *Church*) and make the Magistrate himself, who is by Law *the supreme Governour in all Causes and over all Persons, as well Ecclesiastical as Civil*, the *Priests Ecclesiastical Subject* as well as the rest of the Laity. Some few Priests, such as Mr. CHILLINGWORTH, Dr. TILLOTSON, and others now living, have clearly asserted the Right of all Men to *judg for themselves*.

* Eccles. Polity, p. 308. † Hicckes, Lesley, &c.

I COULD proceed to give an account how they dispute about the *Priests power to absolve Men from their Sins*, about the *Independency of the Church on the State*, about the *Sacrament being a proper Sacrifice*, about the *real Presence in the Sacrament*, about the *Priests of the Christian Church being proper Priests*; and indeed about every Point in the whole Christian Religion, as well as about the Meaning of almost every Text in the Bible: But what I have produc'd being sufficient to prove their Divisions about the Meaning of the Scripture in matters of the greatest importance, I may justly conclude that it is necessary for every Man, instead of relying upon them, to *think freely* for himself; and proceed to the second Instance of their Conduct.

2dly. A SECOND Instance of their Conduct, whereby they make *Free-Thinking* unavoidable, is, their owning in express words the *Doctrines of the Church to be contradictory to one another, and to Reason*.

THE Renown'd Dr. SACHEVEREL
 P. 257. fol. says in his Speech at his Tryal, That by *abandoning Passive-Obedience, the distinguishing Badg and Glory of our Reformation, we must render our selves the most inconsistent Church in the world*. By which words the Doctor must suppose, even before the Sentence pass'd upon him condemning the *Doctrine of Passive-*

Passive-Obedience, that many Doctrines of the Church were inconsistent and contradictory to one another ; otherwise one Inconsistency more would not make it the most inconsistent Church in the world.

Dr. BEVERIDGE supposes our whole Faith in God to consist of Contradictions to Reason, when he says, * *That is most true of God which seems most impossible to us.*

Dr. SOUTH, speaking of Christ's Incarnation, says, † *To behold the Divinity which is present to all places, cloth'd in Flesh, is as if we should imagine not only the whole World represented upon, but also contain'd in one of our little artificial Globes, or the Body of the Sun envelop'd in a Cloud as big as a Man's hand ; all which would be look'd on as astonishing Impossibilities : and yet as far short of the other, as the greatest Finite is of an Infinite, between which the Disparity is unmeasurable. For that God should transform himself, and subdue and master all his Glories to a possibility of human Apprehension and Converse, the best Reason would have thought it such a thing as God could not do, had it not been actually done. It is (as it were) to cancel the essential Distances of things, to remove the Bounds of Nature, to bring Heaven and Earth, and (what is more) both Ends of a Contradiction toge-*

* Private Thoughts, p. 52.

† Sermons, vol. 3. p. 366, 367.

P. 316. { *ther. Again, the same Reverend Person says, in relation to his Faith about the Person of Christ, That were it not to be ador'd as a Mystery, it would be exploded as a Contradiction.*

P. 495. Dr. HENRY MORE, in his *Mystery of Godliness*, says, *There is scarce any Church in Christendom at this day (in the next Page he affirms this, of the whole visible Church in what Nation soever under Heaven) which does not obtrude not only plain Falshoods, but such Falshoods that will appear to any free Spirit pure Contradictions and Impossibilities, and that with the same Gravity, Authority, and Importunity, that they do the holy Oracles of God. To which I crave leave to add his judicious Reflection that follows, tho foreign to my present Design, That this Conduct of the Priest is a heavy sight to the truly Religious, and joy to the Profane, who take advantage thereby against the whole Mystery of Piety, as if there was no truth in it, because that so gross Falshoods are urg'd upon them with the same solemnness as those things that (were it not for the serious Impudence of the Priest in other open Falsities) might pass with them for true.*

3dly A THIRD Instance of the Priests Conduct, is, their Acknowledgment of *Abuses, Defects, and false Doctrines in the Church.*

{ THE Reverend Dr. GRABE (a Man supported at the Charge of her most Excellent

lent Majesty, encourag'd by the most eminent Divines of our Church in his undertaking to publish the *Alexandrian Manuscript of the Septuagint*, and employ'd by our Ecclesiastical Governours to vindicate our establish'd Faith against the Reverend Mr.

WHISTON) acknowledges certain * *Abuses and Defects* to have crept into our Church; particularly, *Baptism by bare sprinkling, not mixing Water with Wine in the Lord's Supper, and the eating of Blood and things strangled*: all which *Abuses*, he says, we are guilty of, in opposition to the ancient Church all the world over, and the plain Testimonies of Scriptures.

How far the Reverend Doctor is in the right as to all these particulars, I do not pretend to say; but with respect to the last, I have often wonder'd how Men professing to believe in the Bible, and particularly those who pretend to understand it according to the Sense of the primitive Church, can live in the Practice of *eating Blood and things strangled*, in opposition to so plain an Institution, Precept, and Rule. For it is forbidden

by God in the Old Testament for a moral and eternal Reason, viz. *because the Blood is the Life*: and in the New Testament, to abstain from things strangled and from Blood, is enjoin'd as a necessary thing. And this Precept was so religiously observ'd by all Christians in the first Ages of the Gospel, that TERTULLIAN says, *One Experiment made use of by you*

Gep. 9. 4.
Lev. 17. 14
& 19. 26.
Deut. 12.

23.
Acts 15.
20, 28.

* Preface to Essay on the Doctrine of the Apostles, p. 11.
Heathens

Heathens for the discovery of Christians, is to try whether they will eat Black-puddings; you well knowing that they judg it unlawful to commit that Transgression you command.*

Dr. GRABE, as we are inform'd by † Dr. HICKES, was for restoring the pure primitive Practice and Discipline, which continu'd more or less corrected in the Church till the Reformation (which by this Account was a Reformation backwards) particularly the Practice of Chrism in Confirmation; anointing the Sick with Oil; Confession, and Sacerdotal Absolution as judicial; and Prayer for the Souls of the Dead; the want of all which being Defects in the Reform'd Churches.

Dr. HICKES || speaks of several things amiss in the Church.

AGAIN, He mentions particular Defects, such as ||| the want of a Side-board or Buffet to place the Elements on before they are placed on the Communion Table, and ** going to Church in the same Dress we go to Plays and Balls, &c.

* Inter tentamenta Christianorum botulos cruore ditentos admovetis, certissimi scilicet illicitum esse penes illos per quod exorbitare vultis. *Opera*, Ed. Rigal. p. 10.

† Account of Dr. Grabe, p. 8, 9, 10.

|| Pref. to Letters between him and a Popish Priest.

||| Pref. to two Treat. p. 53, 54, 55.

** Two Treat. p. 93.

HE says likewise, * *That in this Kingdom many unchristian Maxims, extremely hurtful and detrimental to the Christian Religion, are receiv'd for Laws, viz. "That the King is the Supreme Ordinary; That Canons made by the Church Regent or Episcopal College oblige not Christians in Conscience, without or against the King's Consent; That the King by Act of Parliament may deprive Bishops; That he is the last Appeal of our Church in spiritual Causes;" and that the Acts of Parliament touching Election and Consecration of Bishops are unchristian.*

THE Reverend Mr. LESLEY says, † *That in Sweden they pray not for the Church in general, but for the Clergy before the King. Thus it is in all Liturgies except ours. But the King in our Liturgy is thrust in between the Church and the Bishops, upon the Notion, I suppose, of his being Head of the Church; and the whole Royal Family are drawn in after them, as being Heads in Reversion. We improve, and seem to take care in the first place for our Bodies before our Souls, and for this World more than for Eternity. But they retain the primitive Form in Sweden: they reform not backwards.*

LASTLY, Our Liturgy supposes our Church defective, when we pray upon Ash-

* Letter in the Character of a Primitive Bishop, p. 271.

† Case of the Regale, p. 28.

wednesday for the Restoration of Godly Discipline.

4thly. A FOURTH Instance of the Priests Conduct, is, *Their professing they will not tell the Truth, and making it matter of Reproach in any of the Clergy to tell the Truth.*

UPON occasion of Dr. WAKE's having endeavour'd to state by Law and History the Power of our Princes over Synods and Convocations, Dr. ATTERBURY says, ** Were all that Dr. WAKE says expressly true and justifiable, yet whether the labouring the Point so heartily as he does, and shewing himself so willing to prove the Church to have no Rights and Privileges, be a very decent part in a Clergyman, he leaves to his Friends to consider.*

AB { AGAIN, he says, † *Could such a fine Point be made out, yet surely it does not become Clergymen to help it forward. Let us leave that dirty work to be done by the profess'd Enemies of Religion and the Order; but let not the hands of Levi be employ'd in it.*

A REVEREND Prelate, in a Letter to Mr. WHISTON about one of the most important Articles of the whole Christian Religion, the Eternal Divinity of our Blessed

* Pref. to Rights of an English Convocation, p. 11.

† Ibid. p. 38.

Saviour, says to him, * If you are sure you are in the right in any matter wherein you have the Church's Judgment against you, you should be careful not to break the Peace of the Church by writing against it. If it were but one Brother that would take hurt by your writing, the Apostle says, it is not good to venture that, even tho you know you are in the right; for as it followeth, Hast thou Faith? have it to thy self. Rom. 14. 21

Dr. EDWARDS of Oxford says with respect to the Reverend Mr. WHISTON's renouncing the Doctrines of the Ever-blessed Trinity, and the Eternal Divinity of our Lord, That † the Oaths, Subscriptions, solemn and repeated Declarations, those strong Chains and Fetters, as one might justly imagine them to be, ought not to be broke through. So that according to this profound Divine, the Priests are never to have any regard for Truth, but when it happens to agree with the Oaths they have once taken, and the Subscriptions and Declarations they have once made. Thus a Mahometan or Popish Priest is for ever to continue true to his false Oaths, Subscriptions, and Declarations; and a Church-of-England Priest is to continue true to his Oaths, &c. not because he is in the right, but because he has sworn and subscrib'd.

* Whiston's Primit. Christ. vol. 1. Pref. p. 27.

† Doctrine of Original Sin, p. 114.

THAT eminent Reformer Archbishop CRANMER, by the following Query laid by him before King HENRY VIII. sufficiently show'd his Disposition to conceal the *Truth* from the *Laity*, and by consequence must have suppos'd the Clergy blamable in telling the *Truth*.

* IF the Clergy know that the common sort of Men have them in a higher Veneration, because they are persuaded that it lieth in the Will and Power of Priests to remit or not remit Sins at their pleasure; whether in such case the said Clergy offend, if they wink at this, and voluntarily suffer People to continue in this Opinion?

5thly. A FIFTH Instance of the Priests Conduct, is, If any good Christian happens to reason better than ordinary, they presently charge him with *Atheism*, *Deism*, or *Socinianism*: as if good Sense and Orthodoxy could not subsist together.

THUS the Reverend and Religious Dr. CUDWORTH, who has wrote the most learnedly of all the Divines of our Church, in his *Intellectual System of the Universe*, against *Atheism*, is charg'd with being an *Atheist* for that very Book, by a † Reverend

* Cannon's Account of two Motions in Convocation, p. 14, 15.

† Dedic. before a Disc. of the Messiah, p. 16, 17, 19, 162.

*Divine, who only qualifies it by saying, That the most that Charity it self can allow the Doctor, if it were to step forth and speak his most favourable Character to the World, is, That he is an Arian, a Socinian, or a Deist. Thus the late Archbishop TILLOTSON, and the present Bishop of Salisbury are charg'd with Socinianism by the * Reverend Mr. LESLEY; and in a Book of † Dr. HICKES's, Dr. TILLOTSON is said to be the gravest Atheist that ever was.*

THUS the Reverend Dr. CLARKE, and the Reverend Mr. SAMUEL BOLD, and Mr. JOHN LOCKE are charg'd with *Atheism* by the Reverend || Mr. CARROL; and Mr. CHILLINGWORTH, the ablest Advocate we ever had against Popery, goes commonly under the opprobrious name of *Socinian*.

6thly. A SIXTH Instance of the Priests Conduct, is, *Their rendring the Canon of Scripture uncertain.*

Dr. GRABE says, ** *That the Canon of Scripture was not made while the Apostles were alive;*

* Lesley's Charge of Socinianism against Tillotson and Burnet.

† Hickes's Disc. upon Dr. Tillotson and Burnet, p. 40.

|| Remarks on Clarke's Lectures. Defence of the Remarks. Dissert. against Locke.

** Canon sacrorum librorum non statim ab initio Ecclesiæ, vivis adhuc Apostolis, factus erat; imo ne quidem

alive; no not presently after the Martyrdom of PETER and PAUL, when CLEMENS wrote his Epistle to the Corinthians; wherein the Old Testament is frequently cited, but not one Passage out of the New, except from those Epistles which PAUL had writ to the Corinthians. From thence it is to be infer'd, that CLEMENS thought the Corinthians were acquainted with no other Scriptures, but PAUL'S Epistles to them, The case is the same in respect of BARNABAS and HERMAS; who tho they both wrote a little after the Destruction of Jerusalem, have not cited any Book of the New Testament.

*Dr. MILLS says, * There was no Collection made of any Books of Scripture, whether of Epistles or Gospels, till above threescore Years after the Death of Christ. Not of the Epistles certainly; for concerning the Authors*
and

mox post martyrium Pauli & Petri, quo tempore S. Clemens Epistolam dabat ad Corinthios, Canon erat conditus, siquidem ipsæ sæpissimè veteris quidem Testamenti Scripturas, nullam vero novi Instrumenti allegavit, exceptis iis, quæ ad ipsos Corinthios ab Apostolo datæ erant, literis: unde colligere est, Clementem nullas alias Corinthiis notas existimasse. Similis quoque ratio Barnabæ & Hermæ, quorum uterque paulo post excidium Hierosolymitanum scripsit, neuter ullum Novi Testamenti librum allegavit. *Spicil. Secul. 1. p. 320.*

* Huc usque, nimirum ab anno evulgatæ Epistolæ prioris D. Pauli ad Thessal. ad tempus usque editi Joannis Evangelii, dimidium fere dico seculum, sparsi erant hi libri, ac separatim circumferebantur singuli, absque omni cæterorum comitatu. Nondum enim erat facta Collectio aliqua sive Epistolarum, sive etiam Evangeliorum.

and Authority of some of these, there were great Disputes and Doubts in the Apostolical Churches in the following Ages; which had never happen'd, had any of the last surviving Apostles constituted a Canon. Nor of the four Gospels; the reading of which in the Churches was not then determin'd and agreed on, as I shall show presently.

Dr. BEVERIDGE says, * *Among all the more ancient Writers of Ecclesiastical Matters, you will hardly find two that agree in the same Number of Canonical Books.*

AGAIN he says, † *No one can be ignorant, that some of the truly Canonical Books of the Apostles were doubted of in the three first Centuries of Christianity.*

7thly. A SEVENTH Instance of their Conduct, is, *Their owning and labouring to prove the Text of the Scripture to be precarious.*

vangeliorum. Non Epistolarum certè; siquidem de aliquarum ex his seu autoribus seu autoritate, apud ipsas Ecclesias Apostolicas seculis proxime sequentibus privatim dubitatum ac publicè disputatum fuit: Id quod nequitiam accidisset si ab aliquo Apostolorum adhuc superstitite, ac præsertim Joanne, certus ipsarum numerus fuisset constitutus. Neque vero Evangeliorum: de hisce solis quatuor in Ecclesiâ lectitandis nihil adhuc certe definitum erat, uti mox ostendam. *Millii Proleg. p. 23.*

* Inter omnes vetustiores rerum Ecclesiasticarum Scriptores vix duos in eodem numero librorum Canonicorum consentientes reperies. *Apud Entii Bibl. Sanctam. p. 376.*

† De nonnullis ex vere Canonicis Apostolorum libris, tribus prioribus Christianismi seculis dubitatum fuisse, neminem fugit. *Codex Can. vind. Edit. Clerico. p. 117.*

THE Reverend Mr. GREGORY of Christ-Church in Oxford says, * *There is no profane Author whatsoever, cæteris paribus, has suffer'd so much by the Hand of Time, as the New Testament has done.*

Dr. MILLS has publish'd a Book containing all the various Readings of the *New Testament* he has been able to meet with; and they amount, according to a † *late Author*, to above 30000.

X HOW the Text of Scripture is affected by this Work of Dr. MILLS, you may see by the late Learned Critique of Dr. W H I T - B Y, who in general thus declares his Judgment of it. Says he, || *The vast quantity of various Readings collected by the Doctor, must of course make the Mind doubtful or suspicious, that nothing certain can be expected from Books,*

* Preface to his Posthumous Works.

† Pref. Nov. Test. Wetstenii.

|| Variantium lectionum immensa moles multorum animos suspensos reddet, iisque suspiciones haud parvas injiciet parum quid certi ex libris in omni commate, imo in omni ferè commatis parte variantibus, expectari posse. Depravationem illam textûs Græci, quæ ejus auctoritatem labefactet, ex magnâ illâ lectionum varietate, quam in exemplaribus Græcis R. Stephani invenit, arguit Morinus: Quantos igitur de textu eodem triumphos agent Pontificii, cum viderint eas Lectiones a Millio quadruplo auctiores factas, & demum appendice copiosa locupletatas? Id insuper causæ nostræ haud parum officere existimo, quod corruptelas interpolationesque haud paucas ab ipsis Ecclesiæ incunabulis, ævoque pænè Apostolico, S. Scripturis accidisse fidenter Millius pronunciet. *Whitby's Exam. Var. Lect. Millii*, p. 3, 4.

where

where there are various Readings in every Verse, and almost in every part of every Verse. MORINUS argu'd the Depravation of the Greek Text, which seems to weaken its Authority, from the great Variety of Readings that he had found in the Manuscript Copies of R. STEPHENS. How will the Papists triumph over the Text of Scripture, when they see those Readings made four times as many, and at length increas'd by a large Appendix? Moreover, it does not a little hurt our Cause of Protestantcy, that the Doctor confidently affirms, That not a few Corruptions and Interpolations have happen'd almost from the beginning of Christianity, and in the Apostolick Age.

LASTLY, Dr. MILLS has discover'd a * Passage (very little known before, and which escap'd the Enquiries even of Father SIMON, who has labour'd so much to prove the Uncertainty of the Text of Scripture) giving an account of a general Alteration of the four Gospels in the sixth Century; and this recorded by VICTOR of Tmuis, an African Bishop, who † flourish'd in that very Age, in his Chronicon, which has been only printed by CANISIUS at Ingolstadt in 1600, and by JOSEPH SCALIGER in his Edition of the Chronicon of EUSEBIUS. The Passage is as follows,

* Prolegom. p. 98.

† Cave's Hist. Lit. p. 415.

|| *In the Consulship of MESSALLA, at the command of the Emperor ANASTASIUS, the Holy Gospels, as written Idiotis Evangelistis, are corrected and amended. The Doctor likewise tells us, that St. ISIDORE Bishop of Seville relates the same Fact in his Chronicon.*

8thly. AN Eighth Instance of the Conduct of the Clergy, by which they make *Free-Thinking* necessary, is, *Their daily publishing of Books concerning the Nature of God, and the Truth and Authority of the Scriptures*, wherein they suggest the Arguments of *Unbelievers*; and more particularly * *Treatises in Dialogue*, where they actually introduce *Atheists, Deists, Scepticks, and Socinians*, speaking in behalf of their Opinions, and that (unless you will suppose the Priests to be unfair Writers in Controversy) with the same Strength, Subtilty, and Art, those Men show either in their Books or Conversation.

9thly. A NINTH Instance of the Priests Conduct, is as follows: There is but one compleat Ancient System of *Atheism* (*viz. EPICURUS's System* written by LUCRETIVS) left us upon Record, and the Priests will not suffer that to lie hid in a learned Language;

|| Messalla Consule, Anastasio Imperatore jubente, sancta Evangelia, tanquam ab idiotis Evangelistis composita, reprehenduntur & emendantur.

* *Lesley's Dialogue between a Deist and a Christian, 8vo. and his Dialogues between a Socinian and a Christian, 4to. Nichols's Conference with a Theist: and many others.*

but

but one of them, the late Reverend Mr. CREECH, has translated it into *English Verse*, for the Benefit and Entertainment of the *English Reader*. And there are more Recommendations of Divines prefix'd before his Performance, than ever I saw before any *Religious or Devout Author* whatsoever; and those all eminent and high Divines, such as the Reverend Dr. EDWARD BERNARD, the Reverend Dr. DUKE, the Reverend Dr. ADAMS, Provost of *King's-College in Cambridge*, and the Reverend Mr. JOSHUA BARNES, and divers others; in whose company appears also the *Right Modest and Orthodox Matron Mrs. A. BEHN*.

10thly. A TENTH Instance of their Conduct, is, *Their Use of pious Frauds in translating and publishing of Books*.

IN the old Protestant Bible, * printed in King EDWARD the VI's days, and in the beginning of Queen ELIZABETH's Reign in the Year 1562. the word *Ἐκκλησία* was translated every where *Congregation*, and not *Church*; whereby great offence was given to the Papists: But the Reverend Translators of the present *Common Bible* have in some places render'd it *Assembly*, and in others *Church*, with design to have us believe that the word *Church* signifies the *Priest*. For wherever the word *Ἐκκλησία*

* *Parker's Life by Strype*, p. 207.

manifestly signifies the *People*, as it does in *Acts* 19. 32. there they render it *Assembly*: whereas had they said, *The Church* (instead of *Assembly*) *was confus'd, and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together*; the signification of the word *Church* would not have admitted of any doubt about its meaning. And wherever the meaning of the word *Ἐκκλησία* is not so clear from the Context as it is in the foregoing Passage of the *Acts*, there they translate it *Church*; as for instance in *Mat.* 18. 17. *Tell the Church*. By which the *Priests* understand, *Tell the Priest*. Whereas was the word in the Original translated universally alike, either every where *Church*, or every where *Assembly*, there could be no dispute who are meant by *Ἐκκλησία*; nor by consequence, to whom belong the great Privileges which are throughout the Scripture given to those who are signify'd by that word.

THE Reverend Translators of the *Bible* have put another pious Fraud upon us, by inserting the word *God* in this Passage of the *Acts*; And they stoned STEPHEN, calling upon God, and saying, *Lord Jesus receive my Spirit*; without the least foundation either from any Manuscript or printed Copy whatsoever of the *New Testament* in any Language.

LIKEWISE, to conceal the true meaning of the word *Ἐπισκόπος*, the Reverend

rend Translators have render'd it *Overseers*, Acts 20.
 because it manifestly signifies in that place ^{28.}
 several Persons in one Congregation; where-
 as had they translated it *Bishops*, (as they do
 in other places) it would have appear'd that
 a Scripture *Bishop* was not a *Diocesan Bishop*:
 nay, it would have appear'd that *Bishop* and
Presbyter, (or Elder) were synonymous Terms
 in the Scriptures, since these very Men who
 are call'd here Ἐπίσκοποι, are call'd πρεσβύτεροι in
 the seventeenth Verse.

THUS to conceal the *Order of Deacon-
 nesses*, and thereby keep Women (who now
 think they have no right to any higher Office
 than to sweep the Church and open Pews)
 ignorant of their *Gospel-Privilege*, PHÆBE
 is in our Translation said to be a *Servant of Rom. 16.*
the Church; whereas the Original is Διάκονος ^{1.}
 ἡ Ἐκκλησίας, a *Deaconness of the Church*.

IN the Postscript of the second Epistle to
 TIMOTHY, TIMOTHY is call'd *the first
 Bishop of the Church of the Ephesians*; and in
 the Postscript of the Epistle to TITUS,
 TITUS is call'd *the first Bishop of the Church
 of the Cretians*: but both these were prov'd
 in Parliament to be * *bold and spurious Addi-
 tions* made by some antient Priests, and con-
 tinu'd by our Reverend Editors.

TO give Authority to the three *Creeds*
 us'd in the *Common-Prayer Book*, and recog-

* Diurnal Occurrences, p. 123, 124.

niz'd in the *Articles of the Church*, one is call'd the *Apostles*, another the *Nicene*, and the last *St. Athanasius's*; whereas it is past dispute, that † *not one of them* belongs to the Authors, or Author, to whom it is attributed. But to do justice to the Compilers of the *Common-Prayer Book* and *Articles*, I do allow this might proceed from Ignorance as well as Design. But the Reverend Examiner of the Bishop of Sarum's *Exposition on the 39 Articles* is plainly for continuing this Imposition, when he says, || *That it would have been proper for an Expositor to have made the best of the Article, rather than to have taken pains to have shown the Creeds were not rightly nam'd*; and that the Bishop's honest Discovery does not comport with the Design of the Article.

EVEN in matters of less consequence they corrupt Books. Thus the Reverend Mr. BROWN, Rector of *Sunbridg* in *Kent*, translated into *English* some Letters of Father PAUL, and printed them in 1693. and in his Translation has smother'd the most remarkable and valuable Passages that are to be found in those Letters. Some of the Instances will give you some Entertainment.

HE has omitted these words: 1. *If the*
* *King of England* (meaning King JAMES

† Bishop of Sarum's *Expos.* p. 106.

|| Pref. *Examin.* p. 41.

* Preface, p. 49.

the First) were not more a Doctor than a King.

2. IF the King of England were not a Doctor, some Good might be look'd for. But the most remarkable Omission is this which follows.

3. FOR the English, says F. PAUL, I fear. The great Power of the Bishops, tho under a King, makes me suspect something. For whenever they have an easy Prince, or an Archbishop of an high Spirit, the Royal Power will dwindle, and the Bishops will aspire to an absolute Dominion. Methinks I see in England the Horse bridled and saddled, and the old Rider, as I guess, will shortly get upon his back.

THE Reverend Translator of BAUMGARTEN'S Travels in CHURCHIL'S Collection of Voyages, has stifled a Passage that contains two very remarkable Particulars, which are as follows: * Without the City of Grand Cairo on the Banks of the Nile, they shew'd us a Mosque, where, during the time of Divine Service, the Dead are said to

* Extra urbem in ripâ Nili Muschkæa quædam nobis monstrata est, ubi tempore quo sacra peragunt, humati e sepulcris prodire dicuntur; ac donec suos opinione sacros ritus peragunt, stabiles immobilesque consistere & demum disparere; quod qui ignoret in Cairo nemo est. Vidimus insuper ibi lacum quendam ingentem, Nilo contiguum, qui singulis annis fertur rubescere instar cruoris: quod fortè fit in memoriam plagæ illius Egyptiæ, quâ aquæ omnes in sanguinem versæ memorantur. Peregrinationes, l. I. c. 18.

come out of their Graves, and to continue out of the ground as long as Divine Service holds, and then to vanish out of sight. This is affirm'd by every body in Grand Cairo. We saw likewise there a certain great Lake, which is reported to be as red as Blood once a year; which perhaps continues in memory of that Egyptian Plague, by which the Waters of Egypt were said to be turn'd into Blood.

THE Right Reverend Bishop FELL corrupted in many places WOOD's *History and Antiquities of the University of Oxford*, while it was in the Press; and in particular struck out several Passages wherein WOOD had done justice to Mr. HOBBS, and inserted others in their stead, derogatory to his Fame and Character.

P. 114. OF this, Mr. WOOD himself acquainted Mr. HOBBS; and if you have the Curiosity to see what the Alterations were, you may find them in HOBBS's *Life*.

IN short, these Frauds are very common in all Books which are publish'd by *Priests* or *Priestly Men*; and because some few may think amiss of 'em for it, I will not conceal the Apology that may be made for this Practice.

How! { IT is certain, they may plead the *Authority of the Fathers* for *Forgery*, *Corruption*, and *mangling of Authors*, with more reason than for any of their *Articles of Faith*. For
St.

St. JEROM says, * *If therefore I have translated the good things of ORIGEN, and corrected or conceal'd the bad, am I to be blam'd for making Men acquainted with what is good in him, and keeping 'em ignorant of what is bad in him? If this be a Crime, St. HILARY is as guilty as I am. EUSEBIUS VERCELLENSIS is likewise in fault, who translated into Latin the Commentaries of EUSEBIUS of Cæsarea a grand Heretick, but has omitted all his Heresies. I say nothing of VICTORINUS and others, lest I should seem not so much to defend my self, as to seek Complices in the same Crime.*

I MIGHT go on to assign other Instances of the Priests Conduct; such as *their Declamations against Reason; their Arts and Methods of discouraging Examination into the Truths of Religion; and their encouraging Examination when Authority is against them, or when they think that Truth is clearly on their side; their instilling Principles into Youth, &c.* But that I may not run this

* Si igitur, quæ bona sunt transfuli, & mala vel amputavi vel correxi vel tacui, arguendus sum, cum per me Latini bona Origenis habeant & mala ignorent? Si hoc est crimen, arguatur & Hilarius. Sit in culpâ Vercellensis, qui omnium Psalmorum commentarios hæretici hominis (Eusebii Cæsariensis) vertit in nostrum eloquium, hæretica prætermittens. Taceo de Victorino Pictavionensi & cæteris — ne non tam me defendere, quam sociorum criminis videor quærere. *Adv. Vigilantium.* Op. Tom. 2. p. 312, 313. Ed. Erasmi.

Letter into too great a length, I forbear insisting on these and many other *Instances* of their *Conduct*, which I could assign. And therefore shall now conclude from those foregoing, That since the Priests, not only of different Religions and Sects, but of the same Sect, are infinitely divided in Opinion about the Nature and Attributes of God, and the Authority and Meaning of Scriptures; since we have Priests who acknowledg the Doctrines of our Church, which they have solemnly sworn to preach up, to be contradictory to one another and to Reason, and that several Abuses, Defects, and false Doctrines are crept into the Church; since they profess they will not tell the Truth themselves, and make it matter of Reproach in the Clergy to tell the Truth; since they prejudice Men against their own Doctrines, by Insinuations of Infidelity and Heresy, against all good Christians who are Men of Sense; since they render both the Canon and Text of Scripture precarious and uncertain; since they fill Mens heads with irreligious Notions, by publishing the Arguments of Infidels, and reviving the old Systems of Atheism; and lastly, since they are guilty, on so many occasions, of Frauds in the publishing of Books: we have no way of settling our selves in a right Notion of God; in the Reception of the present Canon of Scripture, and that Sacred *Greek* Text of the New Testament which is commonly printed; and

and in the Belief of the Doctrine and Practice of the Discipline and Worship of the *Church of England*, as founded on that pure Text; nor can we be easy in our own Minds under the Prejudices and Difficulties which the Priests put into us against these Truths, but by ceasing to rely on them, and *thinking freely* for our selves.

S E C T. III.

I HAVE frequently observ'd in Conversation, that Men are more led by certain Difficulties and Objections, which they pick up, to reject what is certain and true, than they are to admit any thing for true by virtue of a proof *à priori*. Wherefore I will now consider the principal Objections I have met with, in the mouths of the Sincere, to Examination and *Free-Thinking*.

1st. IT is objected, That to suppose Men have a right to think on all Subjects, is to engage them in Enquiries for which they are no ways qualify'd; the Bulk of Mankind really wanting a Capacity to think justly about any Speculations: and therefore 'tis absurd to assert that Men have a right to think freely, much more that it is their Duty to think freely. To which I answer,

1. THAT to assert only a bare Right in any Man to do a thing, implies a Right in him to let it alone, if he thinks fit. And therefore no Man need engage himself in any Enquiries by virtue of his Right to *think freely*, unless he judges himself sufficiently qualify'd.

2. TO assert it is all Mens Duty to *think freely* on certain Subjects, engages them only in Enquiries on those Subjects, which they who contend for the Necessity of all Mens assenting to certain Propositions, must allow all Men are qualify'd to do. For the only way to know what Opinion I ought to have in any matter, is to think about that matter; and to suppose that God requires me to believe any Opinion, and has not put into my power the means of knowing what that Opinion is, is absurd.

3. SUPPOSING the Bulk of Mankind do want the Capacity to *think freely* on matters of Speculation, I do then allow, that *Free-Thinking* can be no Duty; and the Priests must likewise allow, that Men can be no way concern'd about Truth or Falseness in speculative matters, and that the Belief of no Opinions can be justly requir'd of them. But still the Right to *think freely* will remain untouch'd for all those who are dispos'd to *think freely*.

2dly. IT is objected, *That to allow and encourage Men to think freely, will produce endless Divisions in Opinion, and by consequence Disorder in Society.* To which I answer,

1. LET any Man lay down a Rule to prevent Diversity of Opinions, which will not be as fertile of Diversity of Opinions as *Free-Thinking*; or if it prevents Diversity of Opinions, will not be a Remedy worse than the Disease; and I will yield up the Question.

2. MERE Diversity of Opinions has no tendency in nature to Confusion in Society. The *Pythagoreans, Epicureans, Stoicks, Platonists, Academicks, Cynicks, and Stratonicks*, all existed in *Greece* at the same time, and differ'd from one another in the most important Points, *viz.* concerning the Freedom of human Actions, the Immortality and Immateriality of the Soul, the Being and Nature of the Gods, and their Government of the World: And yet no Confusion ever arose in *Greece* on account of this Diversity of Opinions. Nor did the infinite Variety of Religions and Worships among the Ancients ever produce any great Disorder or Confusion. Nay, so little *Polemick Divinity* was there among them, and so little mischief did the Heathen Priests do, that there are no Materials for that sort of History call'd *Ecclesiastical*

cal History: for, as that universal Scholar, GROTIUS, observes, * *Ecclesiastical History consists of nothing but the Wickedness of the governing Clergy*. And the true reason why no ill effect follow'd this Diversity of Opinions, was, because Men generally agreed in that mild and peaceable Principle of allowing one another to *think freely*, and to have different Opinions. Whereas had the common practice of Calumny us'd among us prevail'd among them, or had they condemn'd one another to Fire and Faggot, Imprisonment and Fines in this World, and Damnation in the next, and by these means have engag'd the Passions of the ignorant part of Mankind in their several Parties; then Confusion, Disorder, and *every evil Work* had follow'd, as it does at this day among those who allow no Liberty of Opinion. We may be convinc'd of this by our own Experience. How many Disputes are there every where among Philosophers, Physicians, and Divines; which, by the allowance of free Debate, produce no ill effects? Further, let any Man look into the History and State of the *Turks*, and he will see the influence which their tolerating Principles and Temper have on the Peace of their Empire. It is affirm'd in their *Alcoran*, † *That one who lives as he ought to do, whether he be Christian*

* Qui legit historiam Ecclesiasticam, quid legit nisi Episcoporum vitia? *Epistola*. p.7. col. 1.

† Azoara 2.

or Jew, or whether he hath forsaken one Profession to embrace another; every one that adores God, and does the thing that is good, shall undoubtedly obtain the Love of God. And pursuant to their Principles has been their Practice; for from the beginning of their Empire to this day, they have tolerated various Sects, and particularly Christians (upon the terms of paying a small Tribute) tho those Christians esteem their Prophet an Impostor, and would infallibly extirpate with Fire and Sword their present Protectors, if the Empire was in their hands. The Peace of the Turkish Empire is so perfect (in respect to the Peace among Christians) by virtue of the Charity and Toleration which prevail among them, that our pious Bishop TAYLOR says, * *He could not but expect that God would enlarge the Bounds of the Turkish Empire, or some way or other punish Christians by reason of their pertinacious disputing of things unnecessary, undeterminable and unprofitable, and for their hating and persecuting their Brethren, which should be as dear to them as their own Lives, for not consenting to one another's Follies and senseless Vanities.* So that it is evident Matter of Fact, that a *Restraint upon Thinking* is the cause of all the Confusion which is pretended to arise from Diversity of Opinions; and that *Liberty of Thinking* is the Remedy for all the Disorders which are pretended to arise from Diversity of Opinions.

* Epistle Ded. to Liberty of Prophecy in g.

3dly. IT is objected, *That if Free-Thinking be allow'd, it is possible some Men may think themselves into Atheism; which is esteem'd the greatest of all Evils in Government.* To which I answer,

1. MY Lord BACON says, * *The contemplative Atheist is rare*: But many Divines maintain that there never was a real *Atheist* in the World. And since the Matter of Fact is so uncertain as to be made a *Problem*, there seems to need no provision against such a *Monster*.

2. IF there is any such rare *Monster* as an *Atheist*, DAVID has given us his Character in these words, *The Fool hath said in his heart, there is no God*; that is, no one denies the Existence of a God but some idle, unthinking, shallow Fellow. And Mr. HOBBS says, † *That they who are capable of inspecting the Vessels of Generation, and Nutrition, and not think them made for their several Ends by an understanding Being, ought to be esteem'd destitute of Understanding themselves.* And my Lord BACON further ju-

* *Essays*, p. 93. 4to.

† Qui si machinas omnes tum Generationis, tum Nutritionis satis perspexerint, nec tamen eas a mente aliquâ conditas ordinatasque ad sua quasque officia viderint, ipsi profectò sine mente esse censendi sunt. *De Homine*, c. 1.

diciously remarks, * *That a little Philosophy enclineth mens Minds to Atheism, but Depth in Philosophy bringeth mens Minds about to Religion.* And his Observation is confirm'd by Experience. For in ignorant Popish Countries, where *Free-Thinking* passes for a Crime, *Atheism* most abounds; for *Free-Thinking* being banish'd, it remains only for Men to take up their Religion upon trust from the Priest: which being such a Jest upon all things sacred, by making the Truths of God to depend on the various and contradictory Whimsies of interested and fallible Men; half-witted and unthinking People, who can easily see through this, conclude all alike the Priest says. So that Ignorance is the foundation of *Atheism*, and *Free-Thinking* the Cure of it. And thus tho it should be allow'd, that some Men by *Free-Thinking* may become *Atheists*, yet they will ever be fewer in number if *Free-Thinking* were permitted, than if it were restrain'd.

3. BUT supposing that *Free-Thinking* will produce a great number of *Atheists*; yet it is certain *they* can never be so numerous where *Free-Thinking* is allow'd, as the *Superstitious* and *Enthusiasts* will be, if *Free-Thinking* were restrain'd. And if these latter are equally or more mischievous to So-

* Essays, p. 99.

ciety than the former, then it is better to allow of *Free-Thinking*, tho it should increase the number of *Atheists*, than by a *Restraint* of *Free-Thinking* to increase the number of *superstitious* People and *Enthusiasts*. Now that *Enthusiasts* and *superstitious* People are more mischievous to Society, I will prove to you in the judicious Remarks of two Men of great Authority.

MY Lord BACON says, * *Atheism* leaves a Man to Sense, to Philosophy, to natural Piety, to Laws, to Reputation; all which may be Guides to an outward moral Vertue, tho Religion were not: But Superstition dismounts all these, and erecteth an absolute Monarchy in the Minds of Men. Therefore *Atheism* did never perturb States; for it maketh Men wary of themselves, as looking no further: and we see the Times inclin'd to *Atheism* (as the Times of AUGUSTUS CÆSAR) were civil Times. But Superstition hath been the Confusion of many States; and bringeth in a new Primum Mobile that ravisheth all the Spheres of Government.

Dr. HICKES says, † If the *Atheist* does Evil because he believes not, the *Enthusiast* will upon a thousand occasions believe he may do Evil. If the one sticks at no means, tho never so

* Essays, p. 96.

† Disc. on Tillotson and Burnet, p. 24.

wicked, the other thinks the Goodness of the Evil will sanctify the most wicked Means. In a word, they both make a Cloke of Religion for Covetousness, Ambition and Cruelty: They will both lye, murder, rob, and rebel for holy Church and Religion; and there never yet was any Holy League, Covenant, or Association, to begin or carry on Rebellion, under the holy Pretence of Religion, wherein the Ringleaders were not Atheists or Enthusiasts: and of the two it is hard to tell which hath done most mischief in any Kingdom. But the Enthusiast makes the more taking and plausible Hypocrite of the two; he can sooner melt into Tears, and more naturally counterfeit the spiritual Man among the People, and transform himself with a better grace into an Angel of Light.

4thly. IT is objected, That the Priests are set apart to think freely for the Laity, and are to be rely'd on, as Lawyers, Physicians, &c. are in their several Faculties. To this I answer,

1. THAT no Man is excluded from studying Law or Physick, because there are several of those Professions, nor from following his own Judgment when he is sick or in Law; nor is there any reason why a Man, who is not a Doctor in Physick or a Serjeant at Law, may not understand as much Law and Physick as either of them. In like manner, the setting Men apart for the Study of Divinity, does not exclude others

others from the Study of Divinity, nor from following their Judgment about a Point in Divinity, nor from knowing as much Divinity as any Doctor in Divinity, And by consequence there is no necessity to rely on any Man's Judgment, either in Law, Physick, or Divinity. And this puts me in mind of a Passage in Mr. LE CLERC's late *Bibliothèque Choisie*, Tom. 25. p. 130. *A Gentleman ask'd a Proprietor of New-Jersey in America (where there are few Inhabitants besides Quakers) Whether they had any Lawyers among them? Then, Whether they had any Physicians? And lastly, Whether they had any Priests? To all which the Proprietor answer'd in order, No. O happy Country! replies the Gentleman, That must be a Paradise!*

2. BUT supposing that the Bulk of Mankind are oblig'd in matters of Law and Physick to rely on some one in those Professions, the Parallel will not hold from Law and Physick to Divinity, and the Cases are different in these following respects.

(1.) WHEN I thro Unskillfulness in Law or Physick rely on some Lawyer or Physician, I am by no means under an Obligation implicitly to believe the Principles or Opinions upon which the one prescribes or the other acts, or so much as to know any thing in nature about them. The Physician may

may cure me of a Distemper, and the Lawyer may get me my Right, let my Ignorance in either Profession be ever so great: These are matters which can be transacted by a *Deputy*. Whereas in matters of Divinity I am oblig'd to believe certain Opinions myself, and can *depute* no Man to believe for me; nor will any Man's Belief save me, except my own. So that it is my Duty to think for my self in matters of Religion, and I am at liberty whether I will study Law or Physick.

(2.) PRIESTS have no interest to lead me to true Opinions, but only to the Opinions they have list'd themselves to profess, and for the most part into mistaken Opinions: For it is manifest that all Priests, except the Orthodox, are hir'd to lead Men into Mistakes. Whereas there are no Lawyers nor Physicians set apart and hir'd to defend mistaken Opinions in those Professions. And their Interest, as to Success, is the same with their *Clients* and *Patients*; but the Priests Interest is mostly different from that of the *Laity*. A *Layman* wants to know the Truth, and the *Priest* desires to have him of his Opinion.

(3.) PRIESTS are not set apart to study Divinity, as Lawyers and Physicians are to study Law and Physick. The Priests do not study Divinity properly so call'd, but

but only how to maintain a certain System of Divinity. Thus the *Popish, Mahometan, Lutheran, Jewish, Siamese, and Presbyterian* Priests, study their several Systems. Whereas Physicians are not ty'd down to HIPPOCRATES, or GALEN, or PARACELsus, but have all Nature and all Mens Observations before them, without any Obligation to subscribe implicitly to any one: nor have Lawyers any Rule, but the Law it self, which they are at liberty to interpret according to its real Sense, being bound by no Articles or Subscriptions to interpret it otherwise.

(4.) IF I die thro the Conduct of a Physician, or lose my Right by the Conduct of my Lawyer, that is the worst which can befall me; but if I trust to a Priest who is in the wrong, I am suppos'd to be eternally damn'd.

3. BUT thirdly I answer, That supposing the Cases are parallel, no Benefit will follow to any Set of Priests in particular, nor will there be any prevention of Diversity of Opinions, or of any other of those Evils which *Free-Thinking* is suppos'd to produce. For if the Cases are parallel, then Men may chuse their own Priests, as they chuse their own Lawyers and Physicians. And if so, then one Man will chuse WILLIAM PENN, another DANIEL BURGESS,

GESS, a third Dr. SWIFT, or Dr. ATTERBURY, and so on. And if they may chuse Priests of different Opinions, why may they not as well think for themselves? since it is impossible for Men by thinking for themselves to differ in Opinion more from one another, and to hate and persecute one another more thorowly, than they must do upon granting them a liberty to chuse Priests of different sorts.

5thly. IT is objected, *That certain Speculations (tho false) are necessary to be impos'd on Men, in order to assist the Magistrate in preserving the Peace of Society: And that it is therefore as reasonable to deceive Men into Opinions for their own Good, as it is in certain cases to deceive Children; and consequently it must be absurd to engage Men in thinking on Subjects where Error is useful and Truth injurious to them.* To which I answer,

1. THAT this is an irreligious Objection, and is so treated by CICERO in the Person of COTTA. Says he, * *What do you think of those Men, who have said that the Opinion of the Existence of the immortal Gods was invented by wise Men for the publick Good;*

* Quid? ii qui dixerunt totam de Diis immortalibus opinionem fictam esse ab hominibus sapientibus Reipublicæ causa, ut quos ratio non movet, eos ad officium Religio duceret, nonne omnem religionem funditus sustulerunt? *De Naturâ Deor.* l. 1.

that

that they who would not be govern'd by Reason, might be influenc'd by Religion to do their Duty? Have not they destroy'd all Religion?

2. I WILL grant the Reasoning contain'd in the *Objection* to be founded on a just Principle, *viz.* That the Good of Society is the *Rule* of whatever is to be allow'd or restrain'd; and I will likewise grant, that if Errors are useful to human Society, they ought to be impos'd: and consequently I must allow the Inference, *That Thinking ought to be restrain'd.* But then I affirm, That the Rule is as *falsely* as it is *irreligiously* apply'd, and that both Experience and Reason demonstrate the *Imposition* of Speculations, whether true or false, to be so far from being a Benefit, that it has been and must be the greatest Mischief that has ever befall or can befall Mankind.

(1.) Lust, Covetousness, Revenge, and Ambition have in all Ages more or less plagued the World, and been the Source of great Disorders. But *Zeal* to impose Speculations has not only had the same effects in common with those Passions, but has carry'd Men to a pitch of Wickedness, which otherwise *Eye had not seen, nor Ear heard, nor had enter'd into the Heart of Man to conceive.* For what ancient or modern History can parallel the *Brutality* of
Reli-

* *Religious Zealots?* What, the numerous Massacres, Desolations, and Murders for Religion, in particular the Massacres of *France* and *Ireland*, and the Desolations and Murders committed by the *Spaniards* in the *West-Indies*? What, the complicated Wickedness and Cruelty of our *English Clergy*, whom, as † Bishop TAYLOR tells us, HENRY the Fourth, because he usurp'd the Crown, was willing by all means to endear by murdering Hereticks, that so he might be sure of them to all his purposes? And what, that steddying lasting Machine of Slavery, Villany and Cruelty, the Tribunal of the *Inquisition*? The most irregular of our other Passions decay with Time, and their mischievous Effects are restrain'd by good Sense and human Policy; and we have some Passions in us, such as Pity, Good-Nature and Humanity, which help to preserve a tolerable Ballance in the human Machine. But *Religious Zeal* gathers strength with Time, bears down common Sense and Policy, leaps the bounds of natural Humanity, and vanquishes all the tender Passions. Wherefore that excellent Prelate, Archbishop TILLOTSON, very justly observes, || That it will be hard to determine how many Degrees of

* Nullas infestas hominibus bestias, ut sunt sibi ferales plerique Christianorum, expertus. *Ammian. Marcell.* p. 302. *Ed. Valesii.*

† Epist. Ded. before Liberty of Prophesying.

|| Sermons, vol. 3. p. 26, 27.

Innocency and Good-Nature, or of Coldness and Indifferency in Religion, are necessary to overballance the Fury of a blind Zeal; since several Zealots had been excellent Men, if their Religion had not hinder'd them, if the Doctrines and Principles of their Church had not perverted and spoil'd their natural Dispositions.

(2.) THE great Charge of supporting such numbers of Men as are necessary to maintain Impositions, is a Burden upon Society which was never felt on any other occasion. For I suppose it will be allow'd me, that the Revenues belonging to the Orders of *Priests, Monks, and Fryars* in *Papish Countries*, are a greater Tax on the Subject, and have introduc'd a greater degree of Poverty, than has ever been felt from any Lay-Tyrants or Conquerors: for the latter have been contented with temporary *Plunder* only, without concerning themselves how to find out ways to make Mankind Beggars for ever. The Charge alone therefore of supporting such a number of Ecclesiasticks, is a great Evil to Society, tho it should be suppos'd the *Ecclesiasticks* themselves were employ'd in the most innocent manner imaginable, *viz. in mere eating and drinking.*

3. IN answer to the *Objection* I affirm, That the Peace and Order of human Society depending upon, or rather consisting in
the

the Practice of moral Duties; if you impose *any thing* on Mankind but what is moral, the Zeal to perform *that* must of course abate Mens Zeal in the Practice of moral Duties, and consequently prejudice the Peace of Society.

(1.) FOR, extending of *Zeal* to other Objects besides Morality, must take off a Portion of our Zeal for the Practice of Morality.

(2.) SINCE Mankind can never be perfect in the performance of their Duty, they will ever chuse to be punctual in that which is easiest to be done: and therefore if you impose any Speculations on Men, they will not fail in their *Zeal* for them, and leave a proportionable share of Morality undone.

(3.) IT is matter of daily experience, that *Zeal* for imposing Speculations does destroy the Practice of Morality; and every Religious Sect gives us a proof of it. For is it not obvious, that, if you contend earnestly for the Doctrines of your Sect, and against the Doctrines of all other Sects; and in particular, if you are zealous for the Independent Power of the Priest, his sole Right to preach, and his Power to damn or save at his pleasure: you shall be so far indulg'd in Vice and Wickedness, as to have it con-

ceal'd if possible, and if made publick, to have it colour'd over with the most charitable Construction imaginable? Whereas, if you are against *Predestination* in *Scotland*, or *Transubstantiation* in *France*, or against the Power of the Priest in either Country, you shall be represented as the most infamous Wretch (tho they have no particular Immorality to charge upon you) and all your innocent or virtuous Actions shall be construed after the most uncharitable manner.

FURTHER, Are not the *Streets* of the City of *London*, beyond *those* of all other Cities whatsoever, full of common Whores, who are in effect publicly tolerated in their Wickedness? And are not the Men who have dealings with them free from all Punishment, and almost from Censure? And yet few or no Complaints are made, of this Wickedness in the open streets, either from the *Pulpit* or the *Press*. But if any man asserts that a *Layman* may sprinkle *Water* in a *Child's* Face, or make a Discourse in publick upon a Text of Scripture; the *Press* rings with the Crime, and Dr. SACHEVEREL cries out from the *Pulpit*, * *That the English Fanatick, who sets up Lay-Elders, is the greatest Monster upon earth.*

* Assize-Sermon at Oxford, Anno 1704.

BESIDES, they who have an interest to enlarge their Sect and keep it united, know that nothing tends so much to its Increase and Union, as the Toleration of Vice and Wickedness to as great a degree as they can conveniently: for by that means they are sure to engage all the Rogues and Vicious (and by consequence the Fools, who will ever be led by them) in their Party. And therefore wherever the Power of the Priest is at the height, they proceed so far in the encouragement of Wickedness, as to make all Churches Sanctuaries or Places of Protection. Pope PIUS V. confess'd this Secret of supporting a Church, when, upon hearing that the Protestants were in earnest against Adultery and Fornication, he said, * If they will not allow of such kind of sport in their Religion, it will never be of any long duration. And this Secret was early put in practice with success; for ZOZIMUS tells us, † That CONSTANTINE the

* Non si chiava in questa Religione, non durera. Confes. Cath. de Sancy. liv. I. c. 1.

† Προσέει τοῖς ἱεροῖσι καθάρσιαι τῇ ἡμαρτημένων αἰτιῶν. εἰποντων δὲ ὡς εἰ ᾤχεσθαι καθαρμὸν τρέπτει δυσεβήματα τιλικαῦτα καθῆραι δυνάμενοι, Ἀιγύπτῳ πῃ πασης ἀμαρτάνου ἀναιρετικὴν εἶναι τῇ Χριστιανῶν διεβεβαίωσατο δόξαν. καὶ οὗτο ἔχειν ἐπαγγελίαν τὸ τὰς ἀσεβεῖς μεταλαμβάνουσις αὐτῆς, πασης ἀμαρτίας ἔξω ᾤχεσθαι καθίσαται. Δεξάμενος δὲ βῆσα Κωνσταντῖνος τὸ λόγον, καὶ ἀφεμένους τῇ πατρίῳ μετασχόντι δὲ ὧν ὁ Αἰγυπτῖος αὐτὰ μετεδίδωκε, τῆς ἀσεβείας τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐποίησατο, &c. Edit. Oxon. p. 104.

Great, after he had committed such horrible Villanies which the Pagan Priests told him were not to be expiated in their Religion, being as- sur'd by an Egyptian (* Bishop) that there was no Villany so great, but was to be expiated by the Sacraments of the Christian Religion, embrac'd the new Impiety (so ZOZIMUS im- piously calls the Christian Religion) and quitted the Religion of his Ancestors. And this Conversion of the Emperor CON- STANTINE gave occasion to JULIAN to satyrize thus our Holy Religion: † Who- ever, says he, is guilty of Rapes, Murders, Sacrilege, or any other abominable Crime; let him be wash'd with Water, and he will become pure and holy: and if he relapses into the same Impiety, he will again become pure and holy, by thumping his Breast, and beating his Head.

6thly. IT is objected, That Free-Thinkers themselves are the most infamous, wicked, and senseless of all Mankind.

THIS Objection of Wickedness and Ig- norance is made by all Sects one against another, and serves to keep the several Herds and Folds of Men united together, and a-

* Les Césars de Julien par Spanheim, p. 309.

† Όστις φθορεύς, όστις μισαιφόνος, όστις ίναγής και βδελυρός, ίτω θαρρών, αποθανών γδ αυτών τώτω τή ύδατι λέσας, αυτίκα καθαρόν· καιν· παλιν έρχος τοίς αυτοίς γένεσθαι, δώσω το εήδος πλήξαντι, και τιώ κεφαλήν παταξαντι, καθαρώ γε- νεσθαι. Juliani Opera. Lips. p. 336.

gainst one another. And tho in reality Men of all Sects are much alike as to Sense, where Literature equally prevails, and every where the same as to their Lives and Conversations (as is obvious to any indifferent Person) yet thro such Spectacles do Men see the Defects of others, so partial are they to themselves, so ready to believe ill Reports of those with whom they have any difference in Opinion, and to believe good of those with whom they agree in Opinion; so apt to put an ill Construction on any Actions of the former, and a good one on any Actions of the latter; that nothing but the most familiar Intercourse imaginable can make Men, who are govern'd by one sort of Priests, think they are like those in Understanding and Morals who are govern'd by another sort. But this Objection, as it is urg'd against *Free-Thinkers*, is still with more difficulty to be remov'd by them; because they who have Leisure, Application, Ability and Courage to *think freely*, are so few in number in respect of any other Sect, that they must be less able by Conversation in the World to answer an Objection against themselves, so early planted in Mens Minds, and so carefully cultivated. However, I think it may be much easier answer'd upon *Paper*, and may be shown to be more unjustly urg'd against *Free-Thinkers*, than against any other sort of Men whatsoever. In answer to it therefore, I observe,

1. THAT Men who use their Understandings, must have more Sense than they who use them not; and this I take to be self-evident. And as to the other part of the Objection, I assert, That *Free-Thinkers* must, as such, be the most virtuous Persons every where.

(1.) BECAUSE if any Man presumes to think for himself, and in consequence of that departs from the Sentiments of the Herd of Mankind among whom he lives, he is sure to draw upon himself the whole Malice of the Priest, and of all who believe in him, or who hope to make their Fortune by pretending to believe in him (which must of course be 999 of 1000) and can have no Credit but what his *Virtue*, in spite of his Enemies, necessarily procures for him. Whereas any *profligate Fellow* is sure of Credit, Countenance and Support, in any Sect or Party whatsoever, tho he has no other quality to recommend him than the worst of all Vices, *a blind Zeal to his Sect or Party*. The *Free-Thinker* therefore is for his own sake in this World oblig'd to be *virtuous* and honest; but the *Bigot* is under no such Obligation; and besides, has the temptation to become a Knave, because so many *weak People* of all *Parties* are ready to put their confidence in him purely for his *Bigotry*.

(2.) BECAUSE whoever applies himself to any Action, much more to *Free-Thinking* (which requires great Diligence and Application of Mind) must by that Habit expel all those vicious Dispositions and Passions, by which every Man out of action is toss'd and govern'd.

(3.) BESIDES, by much *Thinking* only, are Men able to comprehend in their minds the whole compass of human Life, and thereby to demonstrate to themselves, that Misery and Unhappiness attend the Practice of Vice, and Pleasure and Happiness the Practice of Virtue, in this Life; and that to live *pleasantly*, they must live *virtuously*. * For who, says CICERO, lives pleasantly, except him who delights in his Duty, and has well consider'd and settled his manner of Life; and who obeys the Laws not out of Fear, but observes and regards them because he judges it the best thing he can do? Whereas we see by experience, that most Men, for want of considering the whole compass of human Life, mistake their own Happiness, and think it wholly consists in

* Quis igitur vivit, ut vult, nisi qui gaudet officio, cui vivendi via considerata atque provisa est; qui legibus non propter metum parer, sed eas sequitur atque colit, quia id maximè salutare esse judicat? *Ciceronis Opera*, Gron. p. 4170.

gratifying their present Passions and Inclinations: And accordingly are very little mov'd *even* by their Belief of future Happiness and Misery to become *virtuous*, while they are under such a mistake. And thus of course all *unthinking* People are *vicious*, unless they are prevented by some *natural Defect* or *Impediment*, or are *moral* by the Goodness of their natural Temper. CICERO admirably describes the Effects of this wrong Judgment about the Rule of Morality. Says he, * *Whoever places Happiness in any thing besides Virtue, and judges of Happiness by his present Interest and Advantage, and not by the Rules of Honesty, or what is good upon the whole; if he be consistent with himself, and is not carry'd away with his own good natural Disposition, can neither be friendly, nor equitable, nor generous. No man can be courageous, who takes Pain to be the greatest Evil; nor be moderate in the enjoyment of Pleasure, who takes that to be the greatest Good.*

2. I ANSWER, That tho there has hardly ever been a Country where the Priests

* Qui summum bonum instituit ut nihil habeat cum virtute conjunctum, idque suis commodis non honestate metitur; hic si sibi ipse consentiat & non interdum bonitate naturæ vincatur, neque amicitiam colere possit, nec justitiam, nec liberalitatem: fortis vero, dolorem summum malum judicans; aut temperans voluptatem summum bonum statuens, esse certe nullo modo potest. *De Offic. l. 1.*

have been so few in number, or have had so little credit, or where Superstition has been at so low an ebb, as not to draw some Inconveniences on Men for *thinking freely*; and by consequence, many *Free-Thinkers* have either fallen in with the reigning Superstition of their Country, or suffer'd it quietly to take its course, foreseeing how little good was to be done on so knavish and ignorant a Creature as Man, and how much mischief was to be expected from him: yet they who have been most distinguish'd in all Ages for their Understanding and Virtue, have been *Free-Thinkers*.

(I.) SOCRATES, the divinest Man that ever appear'd in the Heathen World, and to whose Virtue and Wisdom all Ages since have done justice, was a very great *Free-Thinker*. He not only disbeliev'd the *Gods* of his Country, and the common Creeds about them, and declar'd his *Dislike*, when he heard Men attribute * *Repentance, Anger,* and other *Passions* to the *Gods*, and talk of *Wars and Battels in Heaven*, and of the *Gods getting Women with Child*, and such-like fabulous and blasphemous Storys: but obtain'd a just Notion of the Nature and Attributes of God, exactly agreeable to that which we have receiv'd by Divine Revelation, and became a true *Christian* (if it be

* Platonis Euthyphro. p. 6. vol. 1. Ed. Serrani.

allow'd

allow'd that the Primitive Fathers understood what true Christianity was :) For

JUSTIN MARTYR tells us, * *That CHRIST, the first-begotten of God, is nothing else but Reason, of which all Mankind are Partakers; and that whoever live by Reason, tho they are esteem'd Atheists and Worshipers of no God, are Christians: and that such were SOCRATES, and the like.* In

like manner ERASMUS in his Colloquies comparing SOCRATES and the generality of Christians together, gives the preference to SOCRATES in point of Christianity.

Says he, † *There is nothing would more become a Christian, than what SOCRATES said to CRITO, a little before he drank his poisonous Draught; "Whether God will ap-*

prove of the Actions of my Life, I know

not: I have truly done my best endea-

vours to please him; and have good

hopes he will accept of them." *This is a*

wonderful Thought in a Man who knew not

CHRIST and the Holy Scriptures. And

when

* Τὸν Χριστὸν ἀρχοτάτητον τῶ Θεῷ, καὶ λόγον ὄντα, ὃ πάν-
 γιν' ἀνθρώπων μετέχε' καὶ οἱ μετα λόγον βίωσαντες,
 Χριστιανοὶ εἰσι, καὶ ἄθεοι ἐνομίζθησαν· οἷται ἐν Ἑλλήσι μὴ
 Σωκράτης, καὶ οἱ ὅμοιοι. Opera, Ed. Par. p. 83.

† Nihil aptius quadret in hominem vere Christianum, quam quod Socrates paulo post bibiturus cicutam, dixit Critoni; *An opera, inquit, nostra sit probaturus Deus, nescio. Certè sedulo conati sumus, ut illi placeremus. Est mihi tamen bona spes, quod ille conatus nostros sit boni consulturus. Mirandus profecto Animus in eo qui Christum & sacras Scripturas non noverat. Proinde quum hujusmodi lego,*
 vix

when I read such things of him, I can hardly forbear crying out, Sancte SOCRATES, ora pro nobis. But how sneakingly have I seen several Christians die ! Some of them rely on what is not to be rely'd on : Others breathe out their last in despair, on the account of their own Wickedness, and the Scruples with which their heads are fill'd by their ignorant Priests. And it is no wonder they should die after this manner, who spend their whole Lives only in disputing about and practising of Ceremonies.

SOCRATES could not be suppos'd to have made Notions, or Speculations, or Mysteries, any parts of his Religion, when he * demonstrated all Men to be Fools who troubled themselves with Inquiries into Heavenly things, and ask'd such Inquirers whether they had attain'd a perfect Knowledge of Human things, since they search'd into Heavenly

vix mihi tempero, quin dicam, Sancte Socrates, ora pro nobis !—At ego quot vidi Christianos, quam frigide morientes ! Quidam fidunt in iis rebus, quibus non est fidendum : quidam ob conscientiam scelerum & scrupulos quibus indocti quidam obstrepunt morituro, pæne desperantes exhalant animam.——Nec mirum eos sic mori, qui per omnem vitam tantum philosophati sunt in Ceremoniis, &c. Opera, vol. I. p. 683.

* Τὸς θεωροῦντας τὰ τοιαῦτα μαγεῖονας ἐπεδείκνυε. καὶ πρῶτον μὲν αὐτῶν ἐσκόπει, πότε καὶ ποτὲ νομίσαντες ἰκανῶς ἦδη τὰνθρώπινα εἰδέναι, ἔρχονται ὅτι τὸ πρὸς τοῖς τοῖς θεωροῦνται ἢ τὰ μὲν ἀνθρώπινα παρέντες, τὰ δαιμόνια δὲ σκοπεῖντες, ἠγνῶνται τὰ ἀεθλοῦντα περὶ τὴν. Xenophontis Opera. Ed. Par. p. 710.

things ;

things; or if they could think themselves wise in neglecting that which concern'd them, to employ themselves in that which was above their Capacity to understand.

LASTLY, As a further Evidence of his *Free-Thinking*, SOCRATES had the common Fate of *Free-Thinkers*, to be calumniated in his life-time for an *Atheist* (tho the God APOLLO by his Oracle declar'd him the *wisest Man upon earth*) and at length suffer'd that Punishment for *Free-Thinking*, which Knavery and Folly, whenever they are arriv'd to a due pitch, and are well confederated together, are ever ready to inflict on all those who have the Honesty and Courage to endeavour to imitate him.

(2.) PLATO seeing the Fate of SOCRATES, was more politick in his Conversation, and never talk'd publicly against the Gods and Religion of his Country; yet he was no less a *Free-Thinker*, and thought himself into Notions so contrary to those which were receiv'd or known in Greece, that some Christians have suppos'd him to be divinely inspir'd; and others, to have read the Books of the Old Testament. He has so many Passages in his Writings so agreeable to the Truths of the Gospel, that * CELSUS, the great Adversary of Chris-

* Origen. contra Cels. p. 286.

tianity, charges our *Blessed Lord* himself with borrowing his *Doctrine* from *PLATO*. *ORIGEN* indeed very well defends our *Blessed Lord* from *CELSUS*'s Charge, by saying, * That *CELSUS* deserves to be laugh'd at, when he affirms *JESUS* had read *PLATO*; who was, says he, bred and born among the Jews, and was so far from having been taught Greek Letters, that he was not taught Hebrew Letters, as the Scriptures testify. But he is so far from disowning an Agreement between *Platonism* and *Christianity*, that a great part of his Book against *CELSUS* consists in showing the Conformity between them. Likewise *AMELIUS*, a Heathen *Platonist*, who flourish'd in the third Century, upon reading the first Verses of *St. JOHN* the *Evangelist*, cry'd out, † *By Jove this Barbarian is of our Master PLATO's Opinion!* Moreover, the great Conformity between *Platonism* and *Christianity* made many *Platonists* become *Christians*, and many of the *Primitive Christians* become *Platonists*; and was the cause that several of *PLATO*'s Notions became fundamental

* Τις δ' ἐκ αὐτῶν καὶ μετρίως ὁπισθάνειν τοῖς πρῶτοις δυνάμενος τῷ Κέλσῳ γελάσαι, αἰκλῶν ὅτι Ἰησοῦς (ὁ ὡς αὐτὸς Ἰουδαίους γενημένος καὶ ἀνατεθεσμμένος, καὶ μὴ μεμαθήκως, ἔμῳ τῶν Ἑλλήνων, ἀλλ' ὅδε τῶν Ἑβραίων, ὅπερ καὶ αἱ φιλαλήδεις μαρτυρεῖ γράφαι αὐτῷ περὶ αὐτῶν) ἀνέγνω Πλάτωνα. Ibid.

† Per Jovem barbarus iste cum nostro Platone sentit. Apud Reeve's *Apologies*, in his *Dissert.* upon Justin Martyr.

9. { Articles of *Christian* Faith; and gave ground to *zealous* Christians to forge several things under PLATO's name, yet more conformable to the Truths of their *Holy Religion* (as for * instance the *thirteenth Letter to DIONYSIUS*, printed in his Works) with which, and other of the like nature, they had great success in the Conversion of the Heathen World.

{ (3.) ARISTOTLE, to whom the Popish Church for many Centuries past has been no less oblig'd for † *Articles of Faith*, than the Primitive Church was to PLATO, during the Life of his Pupil and Patron ALEXANDER the Great, read to his Scholars the effects of his *Free-Thinking*: but after the death of ALEXANDER, EURIMEDON a Priest accus'd him of *Impiety*, for || *introducing some Philosophical Assertions contrary to the Religion of the Athenians*. And he was forc'd to steal privately from *Athens*; from whence he went to *Chalcis*, giving this reason to his Friends, ** *That he left Athens, that he might not give the Athenians occasion to commit again the same Wic-*

* Cudworth's Intell. Syft. p. 403.

† Senza Aristotele noi mancavamo di molti Articoli di Fede. *The celebrated Saying of Cardinal Palavicino.*

|| Diog. Laert. vita Arist.

** Ἀπὶ ὧν ἀπο τῶν Ἀθηναίων, ἵνα μὴ πρόσφατον δοῦμεν Ἀθηναίοις τὸ δεῦτερον ἄρτος ἀναλαβεῖν ὡραπλήσιον τῶν κατὰ Σωκράτους, καὶ ἵνα μὴ δεῦτερον εἰς φιλοσοφίαν ἀσεβήσωσιν. Origen. contra Celsum, p. 51.

kedness they committed against SOCRATES, }
 that they might not be guilty of a double Crime }
 against Philosophy.

(4.) EPICURUS has in all Ages been distinguish'd as a great *Free-Thinker*, and not less as a Man of Virtue among the Learned ; in which last he seems to have exceeded all other Philosophers. For he was not only eminent for his * *Piety towards his Parents*, his *Kindness to his Brethren*, his *Meekness to his Servants*, his *Humanity to all*, his *Love to his Country*, and his *Chastity, Temperance, and Frugality* ; but for that most divine of all Virtues, and wherein the greatest Pleasure of human Life consists, and of which an ill Man is incapable, *viz. Friendship*. He had that *noble Quality* in such perfection himself, and cultivated it so much in his Followers, that the Succession of his School continu'd many hundred years after the Succession of the Schools of all the other Philosophers fail'd, without that Faction and Division which was more or less in them, and contributed to their more early Dissolution. CICERO, tho a great Adversary to his philosophical Opinions, and who in the Person of † COTTA has thorowly baffled his *System of Chance*, gives him this no-

* Diog. Laert. in vitâ Epicuri.

† De Nat. Deor. l. 1.

ble Testimony, * *That EPICURUS declares it to be his Opinion, That of all things which Wisdom can procure towards a happy Life, Friendship is the noblest, most extensive, and delicious Pleasure. And this he did not only assert in his Writings, but gave a practical proof of it in his Life and Conversation. How great a Commendation this is, appears from the rare Instances of Friendship, of which the Mythology of the Ancients, as voluminous and full of variety as it is, will hardly afford us three from THESEUS's time down to ORESTES. But Oh! what a numerous, what an harmonious Company of Friends, did EPICURUS croud into his own little Habitation! And the Epicureans follow his example at this day.*

2. BUT we Christians ought still to have a higher Veneration of EPICURUS for this Virtue of *Friendship* than CICERO: Because even our *Holy Religion* it self does not any where particularly require of us that Virtue. For as Bishop TAYLOR in his

* Epicurus ita dicit, *Omnium rerum, quas ad beatè vivendum sapientia comparaverit, nihil esse majus amicitia, nihil uberius, nihil jucundius. Neque verò hoc oratione solum, sed multo magis vitâ & factis & moribus comprobavit. Quod quàm magnum sit, fictæ veterum declarant fabulæ; in quibus tam multis, tamque variis, ab ultima antiquitate repetitis, tria vix amicorum paria reperiuntur, ut ad Orestem pervenias, profectus a Theseo. At vero Epicurus una in domo, & ea quidem angusta, quàm magnos, quantaque amoris conspiratione consentientes tenuit amicorum greges! Quod sit etiam nunc ab Epicureis. De Finibus, &c. l. 1. ad finem.*

Treatise of *Friendship* very justly observes,
** The word Friendship in the sense we commonly mean by it, is not so much as nam'd in the New Testament; and our Religion takes no notice of it. You think it strange; but read on, before you spend so much as the Beginning of a Passion or a Wonder upon it. There is mention made of Friendship with the World, and it is said to be Enmity with God; but the word is no where else nam'd, or to any other purpose, in all the New Testament. It speaks of Friends often; but by Friends are meant our Acquaintance, or our Kindred, the Relatives of our Family, or our Fortune, or our Sect; something of Society, or something of Kindness there is in it; a Tenderness of Appellation and Civility, a Relation made by Gifts, or by Duty, by Services and Subjection: and I think I have reason to be confident, that the word Friend is no otherwise used in the Gospels, or Epistles, or Acts of the Apostles.*

(5.) PLUTARCH is the most known Author of all the Ancients. His Works are translated into all the modern Languages, and by consequence his Learning and Virtue display'd before the eyes of all that read any Books. And tho' he was a Heathen Priest, yet he preserv'd his Understanding free, and was not misled by the Gain of his Profession into *Superstition*, nor so far engag'd

* Pag. 35. at the end of his Polemical Works.

in the Craft of his Profession as to conceal his Opinion of the Mischief thereof. Says he, in his *Treatise of Superstition*, * *Atheism brings Men to an Unconcernedness and Indifference of Temper*: for the Design of those who deny a God, is to ease themselves of his Fear. But *Superstition* (by which the Greeks meant † the Fear of God, and which THEOPHRASTUS in his *Characters* expressly defines so) appears by its name to be a distemper'd Opinion and Conceit productive of such mean and abject Apprehensions, as debase and break a Man's Spirit. For tho he thinks justly, that there are Divine Powers, yet so erroneous is his Judgment, that he thinks they are sour and vindictive Beings. *Atheism* is only false Reasoning, while *Superstition* is not only false Reasoning, but superadds a Passion, viz. Fear, which is destitute both of Courage and Reason, and renders us stupid, distracted and unactive. But of all Fears, none confounds a Man like the Religionary Fear. He fears not the Sea, who never goes to Sea; nor a Battel, who follows not the Camp; nor Robbers, who stirs not abroad; nor malicious Informers, who is a poor Man; nor Emulation, who leads a private Life; nor Earthquakes, who dwells in Gaul; nor Thunder-bolts, who dwells in Ethiopia. But he who fears the Divine Powers, fears every

* *Morals*, in English, vol. i. p. 102, &c.

† This was the common Definition of *Superstition* likewise among the Romans. Hence Horace says, *Quone malo mentem concussa? timore Deorum.*

thing, the Land, the Sea, the Air, the Sky, the Dark, the Light, a Sound, a Silence, a Dream. Even Slaves forget their Masters in their sleep; Sleep lightens the Irons of the Fetter'd; their angry Sores, mortify'd Gangrenes, and pinching Pains allow them some intermission at night. But Superstition will give no truce at night, nor suffer the poor Soul so much as to breathe, or look up or respite her sour and dismal Thoughts of God a moment. Neither have they, when awake, Sense enough to slight and smile at all this; nor are they in the least apprehensive, that nothing of all that terrify'd them was real; but still fear an empty Shadow, which could never mean them ill, and cheat themselves afresh at noon-day. In a word, the thought of Death it self puts no end to this vain and foolish Fear, but it transcends those limits, and extends its Fears beyond the Grave, adding to it the Conceit of immortal Ills; and after respite from past Sorrows, fancies it shall next enter upon never-ending ones. I know not what Gates of Hell open themselves from beneath; Rivers of Fire, together with Stygian Torrents, present themselves to view; a gloomy Darkness appears full of ghastly Specters and horrid Shapes, with dreadful Aspects and doleful Groans, together with Judges, Tormentors, Pits and Caverns full of Miseries and Woes.

HE satyrizes likewise the publick Forms of Devotion, which yet are such, as in almost all Countries pass for the true Worship of God. Says he, in the same Discourse,

* O wretched Grecians, who bring into Religion that frightful Mien of sordid and vilifying Devotion, ill-favour'd Humiliation and Contrition, abject Looks and Countenances, Consternations, Prostrations, Disfigurations; and, in the Act of Worship, Distortions, constrain'd and painful Postures of the Body, wry Faces, beggarly Tones, Mumpings, Grimaces, Cringings, and the rest of this kind.

(6.) VARRO, the most learned of all the Romans, speaking of their Theology, said, † That it contain'd many Fables below the Dignity and Nature of Immortal Beings; such for instance, as Gods begotten and proceeding from other Gods Heads, Legs, Thighs, and Blood. He likewise affirm'd, || There were many things false in Religion, which it was not convenient for the Vulgar to know; and again, some things which, tho false, yet it was expedient they should be believ'd by them. Upon which discovery of his Free-Thinking, St. AUSTIN, who records the Passage, says, ||| That VARRO herein discovers the whole Secret of Statesmen and Politicians.

* As translated in the Characteristicks, vol. 3. p. 126.

† Multa sunt contra dignitatem & naturam Immortaliū ficta. In hoc enim est, ut Deus alius ex capite, alius est femore sit, alius ex guttis sanguinis natus. Aug. de Civ. Dei, l. 6. c. 5.

|| Multa esse vera quæ vulgo scire non sit utile, & quædam quæ tametsi falsa sint, aliter existimare populum expediat. Ibid. l. 4. c. 31.

||| Totum consilium prodidit sapientum, per quos civitates & populi regerentur. Ibid. l. 4. c. 31.

(7.) THE Grave and Wise CATO the Censor will for ever live in that noble *Free-Thinking* Saying recorded by CICERO, which shows that he understood the whole Mystery of the *Roman Religion as by Law establish'd*. * *I wonder, said he, how one of our Priests can forbear laughing when he sees another.*

(8.) CICERO, that consummate Philosopher and noble Patriot, tho he was a *Priest* and *Consul*, and executed other publick Offices (which usually makes Men more cautious and less sincere) gave the greatest proof of his *Free-Thinking*. He not only profess'd the *Academick* or *Sceptick* Philosophy, which oblig'd him to † *examine the Doctrines of all Philosophers*, that he might see whether there was Certainty in any of their Schemes; but wrote two *Treatises*, one of the *Nature of the Gods*, and the other concerning *Divination*: in the former of which, he has endeavour'd to show the Weakness of all the Arguments of the *Stoicks* (who were the greatest *Theists* of Antiquity) for the Being of the Gods; and in the latter has destroy'd the whole Reveal'd Religion of the *Greeks* and *Romans*, by showing the Imposture of all their Miracles, and Weakness of the other Reasons on which it

* Mirari se aiebat, quod non rideret haruspex, cum haruspicem vidisset. *Opera Ed. Gron.* p. 3806.

† Qui sequuntur disciplinam Academicam, omnes disciplinas iis percipere necesse est. *De Nat. Deor.* l. 1.

was pretended to be founded. C I C E R O likewise gives us his own *Picture*, and *that* of the greatest part of the Philosophers (as he was well qualify'd to do, having read over the Writings of them all, and convers'd with the most eminent of those who liv'd in his own Time) when he produces this as an Instance of a *probable Opinion*, * *That they who study Philosophy don't believe there are any Gods*; that is, that there existed no such Gods as were believ'd by the People. Again, in his *Tusculan Questions*, he denies, in many places, all future *Punishments*: and after having mention'd the various † *Notions* of Philosophers about the nature of the Soul, he concludes from them, *That there can be nothing after Death*. And as to P L A T O 'S Arguments for the Immortality of the Soul, says he to his Dialogist A T T I C U S (or his Auditor, as some conceive) || *Let us not produce them, and let us lay aside all our Hopes of Immortality*. By which A T T I C U S understood C I C E R O to deny the Immortality of the Soul, as is evident from his Answer which follows: *What, says A T T I C U S, do you disappoint me, after you had rais'd in me such an Expectation of a proof of the Im-*

* Hujusmodi est probabile.—Eos, qui dent Philosophiæ operam, non arbitrari Deos esse. *Opera*, Ed. Gron. P. 157.

† His sententiis omnibus nihil post mortem pertinere ad quenquam potest. P. 3433.

|| Platonis rationem prætermittamus, & hanc totam spem Immortalitatis relinquamus. P. 3438.

mortality of the Soul? Truly, I had rather be mistaken with PLATO, whom I know how much you esteem, and whom I admire on your Authority, than be in the right with others.*

AND here, because CICERO's Works are so frequently cited against *Free-Thinkers* both from the Pulpit and the Press, and his Example recommended for their Conviction; it may not be amiss utterly to disarm the Enemies of *Free-Thinking* of CICERO's Authority, by briefly discovering a common Imposition on the World, begun by some Men of Learning (either thro want of Discernment or want of Honesty) and continu'd by the less Learned, out of deference to the Authority of the former.

CICERO's Philosophical Works are mostly written in *Dialogue*, in which Philosophers of different Sects are introduc'd arguing for their several Opinions. Thus the *three Books of the Nature of the Gods*, are a Dialogue between an *Epicurean*, a *Stoick*, and an *Academick*; and his *two Books of Divination* are a Dialogue between his Brother QUINTUS, who personates a *Stoick*, and himself. Now the modern Priests, when-

* An tu, cum me in summam expectationem adduxeris, deseris? Errare mehercule malo cum Platone, quem tu quam quanti facias, scio, & quem ex ore tuo admiror, quam cum istis vera sentire.

ever they meet with any Passage favourable to *Superstition*, which C I C E R O puts in the mouth of the *Stoick*, or any false Argument which he makes the *Epicurean* use, and which they have thought fit to sanctify (such for instance as the *Epicurean Arguments* from *innate Ideas*, and from the *universal Consent of Mankind* for the *Existence of Gods* in E P I C U R U S's sense; that is, for *Gods in human Shape, who took no care of the World or of human Affairs*) they urge it as C I C E R O's own, and would have the Reader believe C I C E R O look'd on it as conclusive. Whereas C I C E R O himself is so far from approving what he makes the *Stoick* and *Epicurean* speak, that he does in his Discourse of the *Nature of the Gods* endeavour to confute all their Arguments under the Person of an *Academick* (of which Sect he every where professes himself) and in his Discourse of *Divination* baffles all the *Stoical* Arguments for *Superstition*, openly under his own name. So that C I C E R O is as unfairly dealt with, whenever he is cited against *Free-Thinking*, as the Priests themselves would be, did any one cite as their Sentiments what they make *Deists*, *Scepticks*, and *Socinians* say, in the *Dialogues* they compose against those *Sects*.

THE true method of discovering the Sentiments of C I C E R O, is to see what he says himself, or under the Person of an *Academick*;

demick; as the true method of knowing what Sentiments our Divines maintain in their *Dialogues*, is to see what they make their Orthodox Dialogist say. And if CICE-RO's Readers will follow this Rule of common Sense in understanding him, they will find him as great a *Free-Thinker* as he was a *Philosopher*, an *Orator*, a *Man of Virtue*, and a *Patriot*. And they will never meet with any Passages which in the least favour *Superstition*, but what he plainly throws out to save himself from Danger, or to show his Rhetorical Ability on any Argument, or employs in his *Orations* to recommend himself to the * *Roman Mob*, who, like all other *Mobs*, were extremely superstitious, and differ'd not from the *present Generation* at *Rome*, but in having a more innocent and less absurd *Superstition*.

AND

* And yet sometimes his Zeal against what he took to be Superstition made him so far forget himself, as to speak that in his *Orations* which he could only do with perfect safety in an Assembly of Philosophers. As for instance, says he,

I would not have you think, that wicked Men, as sometimes on the Stage, are by the Impulse of the Gods terrify'd by the burning Torches of the Furies. Every man's own Fraud, his own Wickedness, his own Villany, his own desperate Boldness, puts him besides himself, and disorders his Thoughts: these are the Furies which torment the Wicked, these the Flames, and these the Torches.

Nolite enim putare, ut in scenâ videtis homines consceleratos, impulsu Deorum, terreri furiarum tædis ardentibus. Sua quemque fraus, suum facinus, suum scelus, sua audacia de sanitate & mente deturbat; hæ sunt impiorum furix, hæ flammæ, hæ faces. P. 1827.

Again

Tu

AND if C I C E R O's Works come once to be generally read, as of all human Writings they best deserve, it will be found that they no more tend to the Service of any *Priestly Purpose* whatsoever, than the Writings of the *Fathers of the Church* (to whom the *Laity* us'd to be refer'd to find what was not in them) do the Purpose of any Church now upon the face of the Earth.

Again he says, *When you harangue the People with malicious Eloquence, when you demolish the Houses of Citizens, when with Stones you pelt and drive the most worthy Senators from the Forum; when you set fire to your Neighbours Houses, and burn Temples; when you stir up Slaves to Sedition, and disturb the Celebration of Religious Ordinances; when you know no difference between your Wife and your Sister, and matter not whose Bed you defile; when you act like a Madman, when you rage, then you suffer those Torments which alone the Gods have ordain'd to punish the Wickedness of Men.*

And again, *What Evil has he suffer'd by Death? unless cheated by idle Stories and Fables, we can think he undergoes any Punishment in Hell, and that he has found more Enemies there than he left behind him. What therefore has Death taken from him but the Sense of Pain?*

Tu cùm furiales in concionibus voces mittis, cùm domos civium evertis, cùm lapidibus optimos viros Foropellis, cùm ardentes facies in vicinorum tecta jactas, cùm ædes sacras inflammas, cùm servos concitas, cùm sacra ludosque conturbas, cùm uxorem sororemque non discernis; cùm quod ineas cubile non sentis; cùm baccharis, cùm furis; tum das eas pœnas, quæ sunt solæ hominum sceleris à diis immortalibus constitutæ. P. 1622.

Quid illi mali mors attulit? nisi forte ineptiis ac fabulis ducimur, ut existimemus, illum apud inferos impiorum supplicia perferre, ac plures illic offendisse inimicos, quàm hic reliquisset.—Quid tandem ei aliud eripuit mors, præter sensum doloris? P. 1277.

(9.) CATO of Utica has this great Character from VELLEIUS PATERCULUS, * That he was a Man of so great Virtue, that he was the very Picture of it, and in every thing by his Knowledge approach'd more to the Gods than to Men. He never did any good Actions for the reputation of doing them, but because he could not do otherwise. He thought nothing reasonable but what was just; and being free from all the Defects of Men, had Fortune in his power. And the inimitable LUCAN has rais'd a noble Monument, not only to his Wisdom and Virtue, but to his Free-Thinking. And I expect your thanks for giving it you in the excellent Translation of a most Ingenious Author, as well as in the Original. On the occasion of CATO's marching at the head of an Army thro the Desarts of Africa near the Temple of JUPITER AMMON, the Poet says,

still)

† HIS Host (as Crouds are superstitious
Curious of Fate, of future Good and Ill,
And fond to prove Prophetick AMMON's
Skill;

Intreat

* Homo virtuti simillimus, & per omnia ingenio diis quam hominibus, propior; qui nunquam rectè fecit, ut facere videretur, sed quia aliter facere non poterat; cuique id solum visum est rationem habere, quod haberet justitiam omnibus humanis vitiis immunis, semper fortunam in sua potestate habuit. L. 2. c. 35.

† ————Comitesque Catonem
Orant, exploret Libycum memorata per orbem

Numina,

*Intreat their Leader to the Gods would go,
And from this Oracle Rome's Fortune know:
But LABIENUS Chief the Thought approv'd,
And thus the common Suit to CATO mov'd.*

*Chance and the Fortune of the way, he said,
Have brought JOVE's sacred Counsels to our
Aid;*

*This greatest of the Gods, this mighty Chief,
In each Distress shall be a sure Relief;*

*Shall point the distant Dangers from afar,
And teach the future Fortunes of the War.*

*To thee, O CATO, Pious, Wise, and Just,
Their dark Decrees the cautious Gods shall
trust;*

To thee their fore-determin'd Will shall tell:

*Their Will has been thy Law, and thou hast
kept it well.*

*Fate bids thee now the noble Thought improve;
Fate brings thee here to meet and talk with*

JOVE.

*Inquire betimes what various Chance shall come
To impious CÆSAR, and thy native Rome;
Try to avert at least thy Country's Doom.*

Ask

Numina, de fama tam longi. judicet ævi.
Maximus Hortator scrutandi voce Deorum
Eventus Labienus erat. Sors obstitit, inquit,
Et fortuna viæ, tam magni numinis ora,
Consiliumque Dei: tanto duce possumus uti
Per Syrtes, bellique datos cognoscere casus.
Nam cui crediderim Superos arcana daturus,
Dicturosque magis, quam sancto vera Catoni!
Certè vita tibi semper directa supernas
Ad leges, sequerisque Deum. Datur ecce loquendi
Cum Jovè libertas: inquire in fata nefandi
Cæsaris, & Patriæ venturos excute mores:

Jure

*Ask if these Arms our Freedom shall restore;
Or else, if Laws and Right shall be no more.
Be thy great Breast with sacred Knowledg
fraught,*

*To lead us in the wandring Maze of Thought :
Thou that to Vertue ever wer't inclin'd,
Learn what it is, how certainly defin'd,
And leave some perfect Rule to guide Mankind.*

*Full of the God that dwelt within his Breast,
The Hero thus his secret Mind express'd,
And inborn Truths reveal'd; Truths which
might well*

Become ev'n Oracles themselves to tell.

*Where would thy fond, thy vain Enquiry go ?
What mystick Fate, what Secret wouldst thou
know ?*

*Is it a doubt if Death should be my Doom,
Rather than live till Kings and Bondage come,
Rather than see a Tyrant crown'd in Rome !*

*Or would'st thou know, if, what we value here,
Life, be a Trifle hardly worth our Care ?*

*What by old Age and Length of Days we gain,
More than to lengthen out the Sense of Pain ?*

Or

*Jure suo populis uti, legumque licebit,
An bellum civile perit. Tua pectora sacra
Voce reple : duræ saltem virtutis amator
Quære quid est virtus, & posce exemplar honesti.*

*Ille deo plenus, tacitâ quam mente gerebat,
Effudit dignas adytis è pectore voces :*

*Quid quæri Labiene jubes ? An liber in armis
Occubuisse velim potius, quam regna videre ?*

An sit vita nihil, sed longam differat ætas ?

Or if this World with all its Forces join'd,
 The universal Malice of Mankind,
 Can shake or hurt the brave and honest Mind?
 If stable Virtue can her ground maintain,
 While Fortune feebly threats and frowns in
 vain?

If Good in lazy Speculations dwell,
 And barely be the Will of doing well?
 If Right be independent of Success,
 And Conquest cannot make it more or less?
 Are these, my Friends, the Secrets you would
 know,

Those Doubts for which to Oracles we go?
 'Tis known, 'tis plain, 'tis all already told,
 And Horned AMMON can no more unfold:
 From God deriv'd, to God by Nature join'd,
 We act the Dictates of his mighty Mind:
 And tho the Priests are mute and Temples still,
 God never wants a Voice to speak his Will:
 When first we from the teeming Womb were
 brought,
 With inborn Precepts then our Souls were
 fraught,
 And then the Maker his new Creatures taught.
 Then when he form'd and gave us to be Men,
 He gave us all our useful Knowledg Then.

Canst

An noceat vis ulla bono? Fortunaque perdat
 Oppositâ virtute minas? Laudandaque velle
 Sit satis, & nunquam successu crescat honestum?
 Scimus, & hoc nobis non altius inferet Ammon.
 Hæremus cuncti Superis, temploque tacente
 Nil facimus non sponte Dei: nec vocibus ullis
 Numen eget: dixitque semel nascentibus auctor

Quicquid

Canst thou believe the vast Eternal Mind,
Was e'er to Syrts and Lybian Sands confin'd?
That he would chuse this waste, this barren
Ground,

To teach the thin Inhabitants around,
And leave his Truth in Wilds and Desarts
drown'd?

Is there a place that God would chuse to love
Beyond this Earth, the Seas, yon Heaven above,
And virtuous Minds, the noblest Throne of
J O V E?

Why seek we farther then? Behold around,
How all thou seest does with the God abound,
J O V E is alike in all, and always to be found!
Let those weak Minds that live in Doubt and
Fear,

To juggling Priests for Oracles repair;
One certain Hour of Death to each decreed,
My fix'd, my certain Soul from Doubt has
freed:

The Coward and the Brave are doom'd to fall;
And when J O V E told this Truth, he told us all.

So spoke the Hero; and to keep his word,
Nor A M M O N, nor his Oracle explor'd;

But

Quicquid scire licet: steriles nec legit arenas,
Ut caneret paucis merisq; hoc pulvere verum:
Estne Dei sedes, nisi terra, & pontus, & aer,
Et cœlum, & virtus? Superos quid quærimus ultra?
Jupiter est quodcunque vides, quocunque moveris.
Sortilegis egeant dubii, semperque futuris
Casibus accipites: me non oracula certum,
Sed mors certa facit: pavido, fortique cadendum est.
Hoc satis est dixisse Jovem. Sic ille profatur:

K

Serva.

*But lest the Croud at freedom to believe,
And take such Answers as the Priest should
give.*

*Foremost on foot he treads the burning Sand,
Bearing his Arms in his own patient Hand;
Scorning another's weary Neck to press,
Or in a lazy Chariot loll at ease;
The panting Soldier to his Toil succeeds,
Where no Command, but great Example leads.
Sparing of Sleep, still for the rest he wakes,
And at the Fountain last his Thirst he slakes;
Whene'er by chance some living Stream is found,
He stands, and sees the cooling Draughts go
round;*

*Stays till the last and meanest Drudg be past,
And till his Slaves have drank, disdains to taste.
If true good Men deserve immortal Fame,
If Virtue, tho distress'd, be still the same;
Whate'er our Fathers greatly dar'd to do,
Whate'er they bravely bore and wisely knew,
Their Virtues all are his, and all their Praise
his Due.*

Who

*Servatæque fide templi discedit ab aris,
Non exploratum populis Ammonæ relinquens.
Ipse manu sua pila gerens, præcedit anhelis
Militis ora pedes: monstrat tolerare labores,
Non jubet: & nullâ vehitur cervice supinus,
Carpentove sedens. Somni parcissimus ipse est,
Ultimus haustor aquæ. Cum tandem fonte reperto
Indiga cogatur latices potare juvenus,
Stat, dum lixa bibat. Si veris magna paratur
Fama bonis, & si successu nuda remoto
Inspicitur virtus, quicquid laudamus in ullo
Majorum, fortuna fuit. Quis Marte secundo,*

Quis

Who e'er with Battels fortunately fought ?
 Who e'er with Roman Blood such Honours
 bought ?

This Triumph, this on Lybia's utmost Bound,
 With Death and Desolation compass'd round,
 To all thy Glories, POMPEY, I prefer,
 Thy Trophies and thy third triumphal Car,
 To MARIUS mighty Name, and great
 Jugurthine War. }

His Country's Father here, O Rome, behold,
 Worthy thy Temples, Priests, and Shrines of
 Gold :

If e'er thou break thy lordly Master's Chain,
 If Liberty be e'er restor'd again,
 Him thou shalt place in the Divine Abodes,
 Swear by his holy Name, and rank him with
 thy Gods.

(10.) SENECA, whose excellent *Morals*
 are in most *Englishmens* Hands, and whose
 Virtue and Learning are so celebrated, has
 many Passages in his Works which show
 that he was a great *Free-Thinker* ; and par-
 ticularly had a noble *Notion* of the *Worship*
of the Gods : for which some of the modern

Quis tantum meruit populorum sanguine nomen !
 Hunc ego per Syrtes, Libyæque extrema triumphum
 Ducere maluerim, quam ter Capitolia curru
 Scandere Pompeii, quam frangere colla Jugurthæ.
 Ecce parens verus patriæ, dignissimus aris
 Roma tuis, per quem nunquam jurare pudebit,
 Et quem, si steteris unquam cervice soluta,
 Tunc olim factura Deum.

Lucan. l. 9: /

Priesthood would not only call a Man who should talk so now a *Free-Thinker*, but an *Atheist*. Says he, declaring how the Gods are to be worship'd, * *Let us not suffer any one to light Lamps to the Gods upon Sabbath-days, because they want no Light, and Men are not pleas'd with Soot. Let us not permit Men to perform any Morning-Devotions, or to sit at the doors of Temples. He worships God, who knows him. Let us forbid Men to carry any Linnen or Combs to JUPITER, or hold a Looking-Glass to JUNO. God has no need of Ministers or Servants. Why so? Because he himself serves Mankind; and is ready to assist every body and every where. Would you render the Gods propitious to you? Be a good Man. He honours the Gods sufficiently, who imitates them.*

LIKEWISE he says, † *Superstition is a mad Error. It fears those who are to be lov'd, and injures those it worships.*

AGAIN, This Religious Man, like his Religious Brethren the Stoicks, deny'd the

* Accendere aliquem lucernam sabbatis prohibeamus, quoniam nec dii lumine egent, & ne homines quidem fuligine delectantur. Vetemus salutationibus matutinis fungi, & foribus assidere templorum. Deum colit, qui novit. Vetemus lintea & strigiles Jovi ferre, & speculum tenere Junoni. Non quærit ministros Deus. Quid ni? Ipse humano generi ministrat: ubique & omnibus præsto est. Vis deos propitiare? Bonus esto. Satis illos coluit, quisquis imitatus est. *Epist. 95.*

† Superstitio insanus est error. Amandos timet, quos colit violat. *Epist. 123.*

Immortality of the Soul. * *You ought, says he to MARCIA, in comforting her for the death of her Son, to think that he who is dead suffers no Evil. All that is feign'd to be so terrible in Hell, is but a Fable. We know well that the Dead are not subject to Darkneſs, nor Prisons, nor burning Rivers, nor to Waters of Forgetfulneſs, nor to any Tribunals. The Poets have pleas'd themſelves in feigning them, and have disturb'd us with vain Fears. Death puts an end to all our Miſery. Beyond that, our Miſfortunes go not. That places us in the ſame Tranquillity in which we were before we were born. If any one would grieve for thoſe who are dead, he ought to grieve for thoſe who are not yet born.*

THIS Freedom of SENECA was ſo far from leſſening the juſt Eſteem which the primitive Chriſtians had of his Learning and Virtue, that they thought to do conſiderable Service to Chriſtianity, by forging a Correſpondence of † Letters between St. PAUL

* Cogita nullis defunctum malis affici. Illa quæ nobis inferos faciunt terribiles, fabulam eſſe. Nullas imminere mortuis tenebras, nec carcerem, nec flumina flagrantia igne, nec oblivionis amnem, nec tribunalia. Luſerunt iſta Poetæ, & vanis nos agitavere terroribus. Mors omnium dolorum & ſolutio eſt & finis: ultra quam mala noſtra non exeunt, quæ nos in illam tranquillitatem in quâ antequam naſceremur jacuimus, reponit. Si mortuorum aliquis miſeretur, & non natorum miſereatur. *Conſ. ad Marciam, c. 19.*

† Tet extant, and are printed in ſeveral of the old Editions of Seneca's Works, and very lately in Fabricius's Codex Apocryphus Novi Teſt. p. 892.

and him. These Letters are cited by * St. JEROM and † St. AUSTIN as genuine; and the former was so charm'd with SE-NECA, as to put him in his || *List of Saints*.

(II.) SOLOMON is declar'd by the *Word of God* to be the *wisest of Men*, and some of his Writings are authoriz'd as part of *God's Word* to us; in which I find such Instances of *Free-Thinking*, that had he liv'd in our days, and wrote in the same manner, he would have been calumniated as an *Atheist*, unless he had recommended himself to the *Priest* by building of Churches.

Eccl. 1. 4,
5, 6, 7, 9.

HE says, *One Generation passes away, and another Generation cometh: but the Earth abideth for ever. The Sun also ariseth, and the Sun goeth down, and hasteth to its place where he arose. The Wind goeth toward the South, and turneth about towards the North: it whirleth about continually, and the Wind returneth again according to its circuits. All the Rivers run into the Sea, yet the Sea is not full: unto the place from whence the Rivers come, thither they return again. The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done, is that which shall be done: and there is*

* In Catal. Script. Eccl.

† Epist. 54. ad Macedonium.

|| In Catalogo Sanctorum. In Cat. Script. Eccl.

no new thing under the Sun. All which is an elegant Description of the Eternity of the World, not much unlike that of the Poet MANILIUS:

Lib. i.

*Omnia mortali mutantur lege creata.
Nec se cognoscunt terræ vertentibus annis.
Exuta variant faciem per secula gentes.
At manet incolumis mundus, suaque omnia
servat,
Quæ nec longa dies auget, minuitque senectus.
Nec motus puncto currit, cursusve fatigat:
Idem semper erit, quoniam semper fuit idem.
Non alium videre patres, aliumve nepotes
Aspicient. Deus est, qui non mutatur in
ævum.*

AGAIN, SOLOMON says, I said in my heart concerning the Estate of the Sons of Men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are Beasts. For that which befalleth Beasts, even one thing befalleth them; as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one Breath, so that a Man hath no pre-eminence above a Beast: for all is Vanity. All go to one place, all are of the Dust, and all turn to Dust again. * Who knoweth that the Spirit of a Man goeth upwards, and that the Spirit of a Beast goeth downwards to the earth? Wherefore I perceive

Eccl. 3.
18—22.

* So this Verse is render'd in the Vulg. and by Castalio. And indeed the Context shews it ought to be render'd so.

that there is nothing better than that a Man rejoice in his own Works, for that is his Portion: for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him? In another place he argues against a future State, and obviates the common Argument for it, drawn from *Cur bonis malè, & malis benè*, in these words: In the day of Prosperity be joyful, but in the day of Adversity consider: God also hath set one over against the other, to the end that Man should find nothing after him. Lastly, he says, The dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a Reward; and that there is no Work, nor Device, nor Knowledg, nor Wisdom in the Grave.*

(12.) THE

* It is possible the Reader who is fully persuaded, as he has reason to be, of the Immortality of the Soul, upon the Authority of Jesus Christ, who has brought Immortality to light, may be surpriz'd that so wise a Man as Solomon should deny so important a Truth. Wherefore, for the Vindication of Solomon's want of Knowledg in this Point, I observe,

1st. That the Immortality of the Soul was no where plain in the Old Testament, was deny'd by the Sadducees, the most Philosophical part of the Jewish Nation, and of whom their Magistrates principally consisted; was thought doubtful by most Sects of the Grecian Philosophers, and deny'd by the Stoicks, the most Religious Sect of them all; had never, according to Cicero, been asserted in writing by any Greek Author extant in his time before Pherecydes of the Island Syrus; and was first taught

* by the Egyptians; or, according to our Learned Sir John Marlham, was † the most noble Invention. No won-

Pherecydes Syrius (quod literis exstet) primum dixit animos hominum esse sempiternos. *Tusc. Quæst. Edit. Davisii.* p. 33.

* Herodotus, *Edit. Geneva*, p. 123.

† Chron. Canon. p. 217.

(12.) THE Prophets (who had the most learned Education among the Jews, and were bred up in *Universities* call'd *Schools of the Prophets*, where they learnt to prophesy, and among other means to * obtain the *Prophetick Spirit*, play'd upon *Musick* and drank *Wine*) were great *Free-Thinkers*, and have

der therefore, if Solomon reason'd like the Learned Men of his own Country, and the more Learned Philosophers of the neighbouring Nations.

2dly. I observe, That the true Principles upon which the Immortality of the Soul depends, are only to be fetch'd from the New Testament. We learn in the Old Testament, That Adam by eating the forbidden Fruit subjected himself and all his Posterity to Death: But the New Testament teaches us to understand by Death, eternal Life in Misery; and from thence we know, that God had but one way to put Mankind in a capacity of enjoying immortal Happiness, viz. by sending Jesus Christ into the World, who (as God and Man, and God's Son, and the same numerical Being with that God whose Son he was, and yet personally distinct from him) only could by his Sufferings and Death give an infinite Satisfaction to an infinitely offended and infinitely merciful God, appease his Wrath, and thereby save the Elect. Now I would ask, how any Man without Revelation could know that Death signify'd eternal Life in Misery; or that Adam's Posterity should be liable to eternal Damnation for his Transgression; or how without Revelation so wonderful a Scheme as this Gospel-Scheme (which alone lays the foundation of a happy Immortality) could enter into the wisest Man's Imagination?

* In Judæorum sacrificiis incipiebant hymni & choreæ in laudem numinis, propterea ut videtur, quod post hilaritatem illam quam è vini haustu conceperant, aptiores viderentur sacro illi enthusiasmo percipiendo quo sacra illa essent peragenda. Multis hæc probari poterant, ni vidissem orationem potius esse contrahendam. Et vero corporeis id genus auxiliis Judæos usos esse constat ad concipiendum Spiritum Propheticum. Sic Musicam adhibuit Elifæus, cibum filii Esavi, & vinum senior Isaacus. Dodwell de Jure Laic. p. 359.

My Brother.

written

written with as great *liberty* against the *establish'd Religion of the Jews* (which the People look'd on as the Institution of God himself) as if they believ'd it was all Imposture; and with greater liberty against their inspir'd Priests and Prophets, than the *Author of the Rights of the Christian Church* has done against the uninspir'd Priests and Prophets of our *Israel*.

I. AS to the *establish'd Religion of the Jews*, they say, *To what purpose is the multitude of your Sacrifices unto me, saith the Lord? I am full of Burnt-Offerings of Rams, and the Fat of fed Beasts; and I delight not in the Blood of Bullocks, or of Lambs, or of He-Goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath requir'd this at your hands, to tread my Courts? Bring no more vain Oblations, Incense is an abomination to me, the new Moons and Sabbaths, the calling of Assemblies I cannot away with, it is Iniquity, even the solemn Meeting. Your new Moons, and your appointed Feasts, my Soul hateth: they are a trouble to me, I am weary to bear them.*——To what purpose cometh Incense from Sheba? And the sweet Cane from a far Country? Your Burnt-Offerings are not acceptable, nor your Sacrifices sweet unto me. Nay, God says plainly, I

Isaiah I.
11—14.

Ezek. 6.
20.

7. 22.

20. 25.

spake not unto your Fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the Land of Egypt, concerning Burnt-Offerings and Sacrifices.——I gave them Statutes, saith the

the

the Lord, that were not good, and Judgments whereby they could not live.—I despise your Feasts, and I will not smell in your solemn Assemblies; tho ye offer me Burnt-Offerings, and your Meat-Offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the Peace-Offerings of your fat Beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy Songs, for I will not hear the Melody of thy Viols.

2. AS to the Priests and Prophets, they say, The Priest and the Prophet have erred thro strong Drink, they are swallow'd up of Wine, they are out of the way thro strong Drink, they err in Vision, they stumble in Judgment.—The Priests said not, Where is the Lord? And they that handle the Law, knew me not: the Pastors have transgress'd against me, and the Prophets prophesy'd by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit.—The Prophets prophesy falsely, and the Priests bear rule by their means, and my People love to have it so.—From the Prophet even unto the Priest every one dealeth falsely.—Then the Lord said unto me, The Prophets prophesy lyes in my name; I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false Vision and Divination, and a thing of nought, and the Deceit of their Heart.—Both Prophet and Priest are profane.—I have seen Folly in the Prophets of Samaria, they prophesy'd in Baal, and caused my People Israel to err. —I have seen also in the Prophets of Jerusalem an horrible

Amos 5.
21, 22, 23.

Ira. 27. 7.

Jer. 2. 8.

5. 31.

6. 13.

8. 10.

14. 4.

23. 11.

13.

14.

rible thing : they commit Adultery, and walk in Lyes : they strengthen also the hands of evil doers, that none doth return from his Wickedness : they are all of them unto me as Sodom, and the Inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah.——

Jer.23.15. From the Prophets of Jerusalem Profaneness is gone forth thro all the Land.——Thus saith

16. the Lord of Hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the Prophets that prophesy unto you ; they make you vain : they speak a Vision of their own Heart, and not out of the Mouth of the

20. Lord.——I have not sent these Prophets, yet they ran ; I have not spoken to them, yet they

25, 26. prophesy'd.——They prophesy Lyes in my name,

30. yea they are Prophets of Deceit.——I am against

27. 16, 17. the Prophets, saith the Lord.——Hearken not to your Prophets, for they prophesy a Lye unto you ; but serve the King of Babylon.——The

Lam.4.13 Enemy have entred the Gates of Jerusalem, for the Sins of her Prophets and Iniquity of her Priests, that have shed the Blood of the

Ezek. 13. Just in the midst of her.——Prophecy against 2. the Prophets.——There is a Conspiracy of her

22, 25. Prophets like a roaring Lion ravening the Prey : they have devour'd Souls : they have taken the Treasure and precious things : they have made

28. many Widows. They have divined, saying, Thus saith the Lord, when the Lord hath not

Hof. 6.9. spoken.——As Troops of Robbers wait for a Man, so the Company of Priests murder in the way by

Micah 3. consent ; for they commit Leudness.——The Priests 11. teach for Hire, and the Prophets divine for

Money ;

Money; yet will they lean upon the Lord, and say, Is not the Lord among us?

THESE are all such Instances of *Free-Thinking*, that had any *Englishmen* talk'd so in our days, they would have had a place in Dr. SACHEVEREL's *Trial*, and in the *Representation of the Lower House of Convocation*, as proofs of the *Profaneness, Blasphemy, and Atheism* of the Nation.

(13.) Next to the *Prophets* I place JOSEPHUS, who is the most antient uninspir'd Evidence now remaining for the Authority of the Canon of the Old Testament. He was the most learned and polite Author the *Jews* ever had, and has wrote a *History* of his Country, not much inferiour in Stile, Order, and Perspicuity, to the best of the *Grecian* or *Roman* Histories; insomuch that in reading him I have often wish'd he had had a better Subject, than such an *Illiterate, Barbarous, and Ridiculous* * People.

NOW

* The Reverend Dr. South admirably well describes the Jews in part, when he says, They were all along a cross, odd, untoward sort of Peo. *Sermons*, vol. i. p. 539. espous'd to himself upon the very same account that *Socrates* did *Xantippe*, only for her extreme ill Conditions above all that he could possibly find, or pick out of that Sex; and so the fittest both to exercise and declare his admirable Patience to the World. But our Reverend and Learned Drs. Spencer and Burnet have describ'd them more at large. Says the first,

Nature

NOW JOSEPHUS is allow'd by the Priests to be a great Latitudinarian, and adicted to the general Opinions of the Excellency of

saish D. Spen
-ser
 Nature form'd the Jews above all the other Inhabitants of the Earth of a morose, ill-natur'd, and infamously obstinate Temper. — They were a barbarous and cruel People. — Superstitious and destitute of almost all Literature.

And he adds, to justify God's Institution of the Jewish Laws ;

That Superstition is a stubborn Monster, especially when by the Darkness of Ignorance it takes in fresh Barbarity and Obstinacy : And therefore God, in dealing with this illiterate and exceedingly superstitious Nation, was oblig'd to make allowance for their Infirmary, and draw them to himself by a sort of Craft, and not by Reason. For no Brute is more cross-grain'd, or requires greater Cunning to manage, than the superstitious Brute, especially if he be ignorant.

Natura gentem Hebræorum præter cæteros orbis incolas ingenio moroso, difficili, & ad infamiam usque pertinaci, finxit. — Moribus asperis & efferatis. — Gens superstitiosa & omni penè literaturâ destituta.

Contumax autem belluarum superstitio, si præsertim ab ignorantia tenebris novam ferociam & contumaciam hauserit. Quando itaque deo jam negotium esset cum populo tam barbaro & superstitutioni tam impensè dedito ; penè necesse fuit, ut aliquid eorum infirmitati daret, eosque dolo quodam (non argumentis) ad seipsum alliceret. Nullum animal superstitioso, rudi præsertim, morosius est, aut majori arte tractandum. *Spencer de Legibus Hebræor.* p. 628, 629.

D. Burnet The latter says, That from the Laws of the Jews and the Mosaick Oeconomy, one may judg how gross and stupid they were, and incapable of understanding either the things of this World or the other. Their most wise Legislator would never have burden'd Philosophers, or Men capable of Divine things,

Ex Hebræorum Legibus & Oeconomia Mosaicâ judicare licet, crassam hebetemque fuisse istius populi indolem : neque rebus naturalibus contemplandis, aut divinis percipiendis, idoneam. Tot ritibus externis, tot ceremoniis infrugiferis, tot minutiis & observatiunculis,

of * *Virtue and Goodness*, that is, to be a Man of free Thought, and a Lover of *Virtue*.

A FEW Instances of his *Free-Thinking* will not be unacceptable to the Reader. He says, † That CAIN, after a tedious Journey thro several Countries, took up at length at Nais, and settled his abode: but was so far from mending upon his Affliction, that he went rather from bad to worse; abandoning himself to all manner of Outrage, without any manner of regard to common Justice. He enrich'd himself by Rapine and Violence; and made choice of the most profligate of Monsters for his Companions, instructing them in the very Mystery of their own Profession. He corrupted

things, with so many external Rites, so many unprofitable Ceremonies, so many Trifles and things of no consequence. He mix'd nothing spiritual, or abstracted from Sense, not so much as the Immortality of their own Souls, in his Institutions and Religion; and in the Rewards and Punishments promis'd or threaten'd for the Observation or Breach of their Law, there were none beyond this Life, nothing but temporal Good and Evil: and this not on the account of his own Ignorance, but on account of the Ignorance, or rather Stupidity, of this People.

vatiunculis, viros philosophos aut cœlestium dociles, nequaquam onerâset sapientissimus Legislator. Nihil intellectuale, aut a sensibus abstractum, neque propriarum animarum immortalitatem, suis institutis & religioni intexuit; pariterque in præmiis & pœnis, ad legem corroborandam propositis, nihil pollicitus aut minatus est ultra hujus vitæ terminos, atque bona aut mala temporalia: idque non ob suam, sed populi istius ignorantiam, & animorum, ut ita dicam, crassitudinem. *Archæol. Phil.* p. 332.

* Dr. Willes's first Disc. on *Josephus*, p. 30.

† Jewish Antiq. l. 1. c. 3. L'Estrange's Translation.

the Simplicity of former Times with a novel Invention of Weights and Measures, and exchang'd the Innocency of that primitive Generosity and Candour, for the new Tricks of Policy and Craft. All which seems plainly to suppose Men before A D A M.

HE says, * *The Israelites Passage of the Red Sea was the same that happen'd to the Macedonians under the Command of ALEXANDER, at the Pamphilian Sea: in which there was nothing miraculous, if † ALEXANDER himself is to be believ'd.*

WHEN he relates the miraculous Appearance of God at || *Mount Sinai*, he adds, *That the Reader may take this as he pleases.*

INSTEAD of relating the History of NEBUCHADNEZZAR like DANIEL, who says, *He was driven from Men, and did*
 Dan. 4. 33, 34, 36. *eat Grass like Oxen, and his Body was wet with the Dew of Heaven, till his Hairs were grown like Eagles Feathers and his Nails like Birds Claws: JOSEPHUS tells the story thus, ||| That NEBUCHADNEZZAR after seven years spent in Solitude, and no one daring, during that time, to make any attempt on his*

* Ibid. l. 2. c. 16.

† Literæ Alexandri, apud Plutarchum in vita Alex.

|| Jewish Antiq. l. 3. c. 5.

||| Antiquities, l. 10. c. 11.

Government, God was prevail'd on to reinstate him in the Exercise of his Kingly Power.

I COULD cite many other Passages of the like nature, but that I may not be tedious, I will give you only one more; and that shall be the most remarkable Passage in his whole Works, out of his *second Book against APPION*, as it is translated by the Reverend* Dr. WILLES: *That MOSES from his Justice and Piety might very well judge that he had God for his Guide, and when he was once persuaded of that himself, he did well to persuade the People to think so too; just as the Greeks pretended to have their Laws from APOLLO, whether they really thought so or no, or thought that the best way to make them receiv'd of the People.*

TO account for this *Free-Thinking* of JOSEPHUS, the *Priests* themselves have recourse to as free a Solution. Our Reverend and Learned† GREGORY says, JOSEPHUS being desirous that his Work might find Acceptation with the Gentiles, took diligent heed to make the Disposition of his History of such a Temper, as that nothing should be propos'd so incredible, as not to bear some congruity with such things which had been known before, and were like to be hereafter.

* First Disc. on Josephus, p. 3.

† Gregory's Posthuma, p. 32.

(14.) ORIGEN (who was the first Christian that had any general Literature, and whose great *Abilities*, according to a Reverend * Divine, *wip'd off a very popular Objection against Christianity, That none but Fools were Christians*; and on whose Learning and Piety EUSEBIUS employs the whole *sixth Book of his Ecclesiastical History*) was a very great *Free-Thinker*; and for that reason was not call'd *Saint*, like some other *Fathers* who seem to have had the true Title to that Appellation, from their *Want of Learning* and *Excess of Zeal*. There is likewise another conspicuous Testimony of his *Free-Thinking* from the great Debate in the Christian Church, *Whether he was damn'd or no*; which was at length determin'd by the fifth † General Council in the affirmative, upon the *Vision of a holy Old Man who dreamt he saw ORIGEN in Hell*, and upon the *Request of the then Emperor to have ORIGEN and his Opinions damn'd*.

(15.) MINUTIUS FELIX, another polite and learned Father of the Church, has left us an *Apology for the Christian Religion*, which a Reverend || Author thinks one of the best Books next the Bible; wherein he, as all understanding Christians must be, appears to have been a great *Free-Thinker*.

* Reeve's Apol. in the Notes, vol. 2. p. 325.

† Binet du Salut. d'Origene, p. 191.

|| Reeve's Pref. before his Apologies, p. 1.

HE has such a noble Idea of Christianity as to say, * *That either the Christians were all Philosophers, or all the old Philosophers were Christians.*

AND to the Heathen Objection, † *Why the Christians had no Altars, no Churches, no publick Preaching, nor publick Assemblies*; he answers like a true modern Latitudinarian Free-Thinking Christian: || *What Church should I build for God, when the whole World cannot contain him? And when I, who am only a Man, live unconfin'd, shall I confine the Majesty of God in a little House? Is it not more becoming the Deity, to have a Church in our Minds and in our Hearts? Shall I offer Sacrifices and Oblations to the Deity of those things he has made for my use, as if I turn'd back on his hands the Presents he has made me?*

* Aut Christianos Philosophos esse, aut Philosophos fuisse Christianos. *Min. Felix*, notis var. p. 155.

† Cur nullas aras habent, nulla templa, nunquam palam loqui, nunquam liberè congregari? p. 91.

|| Quod templum ei extruam, cum totus hic mundus eum capere non possit? Et cum homo latius maneam, intra unam ædiculam vim tantæ Majestatis includam? Nonne melius in nostra dedicandus est mente? In nostro imo consecrandus est pectore? Hostias & victimas domino offeram, quas in usum mei protulit, ut rejiciam ei suum munus? Ingratum est; cum sit litabilis hostia, bonus animus, & pura mens, & sincera conscientia. Igitur qui innocentiam colit, Domino supplicat; qui justitiam, Deo libat; qui fraudibus abstinet, propitiat Deum; qui hominem periculo subripit, opimam victimam cædit. Hæc nostra sacrificia, hæc Dei sacra sunt. Sic apud nos religiosior ille est, qui justior. *Ibid.* p. 313.

This is Ingratitude; since all the Sacrifice he requires is Justice, Purity, and Sincerity. Therefore he who lives innocently, worships him. He who does justice, sacrifices. He who abstains from injustice, gives full Satisfaction to the Deity: and he who saves another from danger, offers the noblest Victim. These are our Sacrifices, this is our Divine Service; so that we esteem the honestest Man among us the most religious.

AS MINUTIUS FELIX thought *Altar* and *Sacrifice* to be no part of the nature of *Christian Worship*, and by consequence a proper *Priesthood* neither essential nor necessary; so he has painted out in very lively colours the *Mischief* of such a *Priesthood*, and shown how happy the *World* was when there was none. Says he, * *Where are there more Assignations made, more Pimping, more Adulteries concerted, than by Priests in their Churches and at their Altars? And there is more flaming Lust perpetrated in Religious Houses than in the publick Stews. The Assyrians, Medes, Persians, Grecians, and Egyptians, had flourishing Empires without and before there were any Orders of Priests in the World.*

* Ubi magis à sacerdotibus quam inter aras & delubra conducuntur stupra, tractantur lenocinia, adulteria meditantur? Frequentius denique in ædituorum cellulis, quam in ipsis lupanaribus flagrans libido defungitur. Et tamen ante eos, diu, regna tenuerunt, Assyrii, Medi, Persæ, Græci etiam, & Ægyptii, cum Pontifices & Arvales, & Salios, & Vestales, & Augures non haberent. *Ibid.* p. 238.

LASTLY, MINUTIUS FELIX understood well both the *weak side* and *knaveish side* of human Nature, when he said, * *We learn Fables and Absurdities from our ignorant Ancestors; and what is more intolerable, we employ our Learning and Studies to make sense of them.*

(16.) SYNESIUS, a celebrated African Bishop of the fifth Century, and a great Philosopher, had, like ORIGEN and MINUTIUS FELIX, too much Learning and too little Zeal to be call'd Saint; and was so uprightly sincere, that he would not accept of his Bishoprick but on the following *Free-Thinking* terms, as he expresses himself: † *To shake those Doctrines, says he, that are demonstrated, is difficult, or rather impossible. And you know that Philosophy is inconsistent with the receiv'd Opinions. I cannot grant the Soul to be of later original than the Body. I shall not say that the Universe and its Parts will perish together. The commonly receiv'd Story of the Resurrection contains something sacred and not fit to be divulg'd, and I am*
far

* Fabulas & errores ab imperitis parentibus discimus; & quod est gravius, ipsis studiis & disciplinis elaboramus.
p. 203.

† Καλεπὸν ἔστιν, εἰ μὴ καὶ λίαν ἀδύνατον, εἰς ψυχὴν τὴν δι' ἐπιστήμης εἰς ἀποδείξιν ἐλθόντα δόγματα σαλευθῆναι. ἴδμεν δ' ὅτι πολλὰ φιλοσοφία τῆς θρυλληθείσης τέτοις ἀντιστατέταται δόγματι. ἀμέλει τὴν ψυχὴν ἐκ ἀξιώσει, ποτὲ σαματῶ.

far from acknowledging the common Opinions concerning it. Indeed, a Philosophical Mind, tho a proper Judg of Truth, yields to the necessity of disguising. For as Light is to the Sight, so is Truth to the common People. Whereas therefore the Sight without hurt cannot enjoy immoderate Light, and Darknes is better for infirm Eyes: so I affirm Disguise is more useful to the Vulgar, and Truth hurts those who cannot look into the Evidence of things. If therefore the Laws of Episcopal Consecration establish'd among us allow of this, I can submit to be consecrated; while I have the liberty to philosophize at home, and talk mysteriously to the People in publick, neither teaching them any thing thorowly, nor unteaching them any thing, but suffering them to continue in their preconceiv'd Opinions. But if those Laws suppose a Bishop should be so affected, and be like the common People in his Opinions, I cannot avoid publickly discovering my self.

For

καὶ τὸ ὑπεροχὴν νομίζεν ὅτι κόσμον ἐφύτω καὶ τὰλλα μέγα συνδουλεύεσθαι. τὴν κατωμνησθῆναι ἀνάστασιν ἱερὴν πῇ καὶ ἀπορρήτων ἡγῆμαι, καὶ πολλὰ εἶπω ταῖς τοῖς πληθεὺς ὑπολήψεσιν ὁμολογήσαι. νῦν μὲν ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ ἐπὶ πλὴν τὰ πληθεὺς, συγχωρεῖ τῇ χρείᾳ τὴν φάσκειν. ἀνάλογον γὰρ ἐστὶ φῶς πρὸς ἀλήθειαν, καὶ ὄμμα πρὸς δῆμον. ἢ ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς εἰς κακὸν ἂν ἀπτελῶσθαι ἀπλήρη φωτὸς, καὶ ἢ τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς τὸ σκότος ἀφελῶσθαι. ταύτη καὶ τὸ ψεύδος ὄφελος εἶναι πιδεῖναι δῆμον, καὶ βλαβερὸν τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῖς ἐκ ἰσχύου ἐρατεῖναι πρὸς τὴν ἡμῶν ὄντων ἐνέργειαν. εἰ ταῦτα καὶ οἱ καὶ ἡμᾶς ἱεροσύνης συγχωρεῖν ἐμοὶ νόμοι, δυναίμην ἂν ἱερεῖσθαι, τὰ μὲν οἰκοι φιλοσοφῶν, τὰ δὲ ἔξω φιλομυθῶν, εἰ μὴ διδασκων, ἀλλ' ἐδὲ μὲν τοι μελαδιδάσκων, μένειν δὲ ὡς ὅτι ἐπὶ ἀπελήψεως. εἰ δὲ φασιν ἔγωγε εἶναι καὶ κινεῖσθαι, καὶ δῆμον εἶναι τὴν ἱερεῖα ταῖς δόξαις, ἐκ ἂν φανερὸν φανερὸν ἐμαυτὸν ἀπασὶ καδισαῖς. δῆμον γὰρ δὴ καὶ φιλοσοφία, πῇ πρὸς

ἀλλή-

For what relation has Philosophy to the common People? The Truth in Divine Things ought to be kept mysterious. But the People ought to be affected otherways. Again and again I will speak it, I think a wise Man, without urgent necessity to the contrary, ought to leave others to their Sentiments, and at the same time to retain his own. But if you make me a Bishop, I will not counterfeit my Opinions. Of this I call God and Man to witness. And he was made Bishop of Cyrene on these Free-Thinking Terms.

BUT I must not conceal from you, That as they who elected him knew the mighty efficacy of a Bishoprick to convert, and therefore doubted not of his speedy Orthodoxy; so * he did not fail them, but was soon enlighten'd in the point of the Resurrection. For when † EVAGRIUS, a Heathen Philosopher, and his old Friend, came to visit him upon his Promotion, SYNESIUS took a great deal of pains to convert him; insomuch that the Philosopher declar'd himself convinc'd of the Truth of the Christian Religion, and in particular of the Resurrection. And the following Particular is re-

αλληλα; τὴν μὲν ἀληθειαν ὅτι θεῶν ἀπόρρητον εἶναι δεῖ. τὸ δὲ πλῆθος ἐτέρας ἕξως δεῖται. αὐτοῖς ὅ καὶ πολλάκις ἐρῶ, μηδέμιᾶς ἀνάγκης παρύσης. ἕτ' ἐλέγχον σαφὲν, ἕτ' ἐλέγχεται. καλέμενος δ' εἰς ἱερωσύνην, καὶ ἀξίῳ περὶ τοῦ εἶναι λόγῳ. ταῦτα Θεὸν, ταῦτα ἀνθρώπους μαρτυροῦμαι.
Opera, p. 249.

* Photii Biblioth. Cod. 26.

† Dupin Bibl. Seicle. 5. prem. par. p. 845, 846. taken out of Pratum Spirituale.

corded in *Ecclesiastical History*, as an Evidence of the Sincerity of them both, and likewise as an undoubted Proof of the *Resurrection* it self. The Philosopher, after he had receiv'd his Baptism, came to SYNESIUS, and gave him a Sum of Mony to distribute among the Poor, and requir'd a *Note under his Hand*, by which he should oblige himself to pay it him again in the other World. SYNESIUS made no scruple to give him such a *Note*. The Philosopher kept the *Note*, and some time before his death order'd his Children to put it into his Coffin with him. Three days after his death, he appear'd to SYNESIUS, and desir'd him to come to his Tomb, and take up the *Note* he had given him, because he had receiv'd his Mony, and assur'd him he should find a *Receipt* under his Hand at the bottom of the *Note*. SYNESIUS, who knew not that EVAGRIUS's Children had put the *Note* in their Father's Coffin, sent to them, and having found out the Truth of the matter, and acquainted them with what had happen'd, went with the Clergy and Magistrates of *Cyrene* to the Tomb, open'd the Coffin, found the *Note*, and a *Receipt* under EVAGRIUS's Hand. And as a proof of all this, the *Note* and *Receipt* were preserv'd in the *Vestry* of the Episcopal Church of *Cyrene*.

(17.) MY Lord BACON shew'd himself to be a great *Free-Thinker*, not only by throwing off the old and introducing a new Philosophy, but by several Passages in his Works relating directly to Religion. He explain'd the whole Secret of Superstition, when he said, **That Nature has planted in every living thing a kind of Care and Fear for the Preservation of its own Life and Being, and for the shunning and resisting of Evils that may befall it: And yet this Nature knows not how to keep a mean, but always intermixeth vain and empty Fears; so that all things (if their Insides might be seen) are full of Panick Fears: And above all, Men, and especially the Vulgar, who are loaded and toss'd about with Superstition (which is nothing else but Panick Fear) especially in times of Difficulty, Danger, and Adversity. And he commends this Saying of EPICURUS as divine, " That wise Men are not profane when they deny the Gods of the common People, but they are profane when they think*

* Natura rerum omnibus viventibus indidit metum & formidinem, vitæ atque essentiæ suæ conservatricem, ac mala ingruentia vitantem & depellentem. Veruntamen eadem natura modum tenere nescia est, sed timoribus salutaribus semper vanos & inanes admiscet; adeo ut (si intus conspici darentur) omnia *Paniciis Terroribus* plenissima sint: præsertim humana, & maximè omnium apud vulgum, qui superstitione (quæ verè nihil aliud est nisi *Panicus Terror*) in immensum laborat & agitur, præcipuè temporibus duris, & trepidis, & adversis. *Augm. Scient.* l. 2. c. 13.

" the

“ the Gods are such as the common People
“ believe in.” *

HE likewise shows his Suspicion of the Facts upon which most of the Superstitions of the World are grounded, when he says,
† *That whatever any way has the least relation to Religion, is particularly liable to Suspicion; as for Instance, the strange Stories and Prodigies recorded by LIVY.*

LASTLY, He saw clearly into the Mischief of *Superstition*, when he prefer'd *Atheism* to it in his *Essay* upon that Subject.

(18.) THOMAS HOBBS of *Malmesbury*, notwithstanding his several false Opinions, and his *High-Church Politicks*, is a great instance of Learning, Virtue, and Free-Thinking. My Lord CLARENDON says, || *His Leviathan contains in it good Learning of all kinds, politely extracted, and very wittily and cunningly digested in a very commendable Method, and in a vigorous and pleasant Stile.*—— *That among the excellent Qualities, Parts, and Faculties with which Mr. HOBBS is plentifully endow'd, his Or-*

P. 16.

* Ut Divine Epicurus locutus sit, Non Deos vulgi negare profanum, sed vulgi opiniones Diis applicare profanum, Ibid.

† Maxime habenda sunt pro suspectis quæ quomodo-cunque dependent a Religione, ut prodigia Livii. Nov. Org. l. 2. aph. 29.

|| Survey, p. 2.

der and Method, and his clear Expressions, his Conceptions in weighty, proper, and significant Words, are very remarkable and commendable.

—That his whole Book discovers a Master-^{P. 21.}
Faculty in making hard things easy to be understood. But for his Virtue, my Lord says, He is one of his oldest Acquaintance, and of ^{P. 3.}
whom he has always had a great esteem, as a Man who, besides his eminent Parts of Learning and Knowledg, hath been always look'd on as a Man of Probity, and of a Life free from Scandal.

(19.) THE next Instance I shall lay before you, shall be Archbishop TILLOTSON; whom all English Free-Thinkers own as their Head, and whom even the Enemies of Free-Thinking will allow to be a proper Instance to my purpose. His Learning and Good Sense are disputed by none. And for his Virtue and Free-Thinking, I appeal to Dr. HICKES, who says, * He caus'd several to turn Atheists, and ridicule the Priesthood and Religion; and who records him for the Gravest Atheist that ever was. Where by a Promoter of Atheism and Contempt of the Priesthood, and by Atheist, ought to be understood (considering whose Language it is, and to whom it is apply'd) a Man who did not take up his Opinions upon the Authority of any Man, or encourage others to do so, that is, a Free-

* Hickes's Disc. on Tillotson and Burnet, p. 38, 40, 74.

Thinker; and by *Grave*, ought to be understood a *Man of Virtue and Morals*. But his Works are the noblest Testimony. They, tho' chiefly consisting of † *Sermons*, tend to the promoting of true Religion or *Virtue* (in the practice whereof the Peace and Happiness of Society consist) and *Free-Thinking*: and in *them* he has greatly exceeded the Idea he us'd to give of the *Goodness of a Sermon*, by frequently repeating the words of a witty Man, *That it was a good Sermon which had no hurt in it.*

WHAT a charming Idea does he give us of the *Deity*? It is alone sufficient, without any further Argument, to make the *Atheist* wish there were a *Deity*, and by silencing his Prejudices dispose him to Conviction. || *Did but Men*, says he, consider

† What is here said about *Sermons* may possibly give offence to all *Preachers of Sermons*, and to some *Hearers*: wherefore I humbly offer to their Consideration the following Passage of that *Wise and Free-Thinking Princess, Queen Elizabeth*, taken out of her Proclamation to forbid *Preaching*, printed in the Appendix to *Strype's Annals*: viz. That since from *Preaching* there ariseth amongst the common sort of People not only unfruitful *Disputes* in matters of Religion, but also *Contention*, and occasion to break common *Quiet*; her Majesty hath for the quiet *Governance* of her Subjects thought it necessary to charge and command all her Subjects, as well *Clergy* as *Laity*, That they do forbear to preach or teach, or give audience to any manner of *Doctrine* or *Preaching*: Her Majesty desiring by all means possible to procure and restore *Virtue* and *Godliness*, with universal *Charity* and *Concord*, to this her *Realm*.

|| *Sermons*, vol. 1. p. 69.

the true Notion of God, he would appear so lovely a Being, and so full of Goodness, and of all desirable Perfections, that even those very Persons who are of such irregular Understandings as not to believe there is a God, yet could not refrain from wishing with all their hearts that there were one. For is it not really desirable to every Man, that there should be such a Being, as takes particular care of every one of us, and loves us, and delights to do us good; as understands all our Wants, and is able and willing to relieve us in our greatest straits, when nothing else can? Is it not every Man's interest, that there should be such a Governour of the World, as really designs our Happiness, and hath omitted nothing that is necessary to it; as would govern us for our advantage, and will require nothing of us but what is for our good, and yet will infinitely reward us for the doing of that which is best for our selves? And we have reason to believe God to be such a Being, if he be at all.

WHAT a Christianity, and how different from *that* of the Imposers of Creeds, Ceremonies, and particular Forms of Ecclesiastical Government, does he set before us? * *All the Dutys, says he, of Christian Religion which respect God, are no other but what natural Light prompts Men to, excepting the two Sacraments, and praying to God in the*

* Ibid. p. 169.

Name and by the Mediation of Christ. And even these things (which lay no Obligation upon us, but as they are the pure positive Commands of God) he justly observes, are of less moment than any of those parts of Religion which in their own nature tend to the Happiness of human Society. * *For, says he, I think my self oblig'd to deal plainly, and to be so faithful to Mothers, as to tell them that nursing their own Children is a natural Duty; and because it is so, of a more indispensable Obligation than any positive Precept of Reveal'd Religion.* And as he plainly saw, † *That all Sects are commonly most hot and furious for those things for which there is least reason: so whenever Reveal'd Religion was accompany'd with Heat and Fury, he scrupled not to say, Better it were that there were no Reveal'd Religion, and that human Nature were left to the Conduct of its own Principles and Inclinations, which are much more mild and merciful, much more for the Peace and Happiness of human Society, than to be acted by a Religion which inspires Men with so wild a Fury.*

P. 18.

P. 73.

P. 77.

THEN, in the Interpretation of what God has reveal'd, he says we are to govern our selves by our natural Notions; and that a Miracle is not enough to give credit to a

* Six Sermons, &c. p. 73.

† Vol. 3. p. 350.

Prophet, who teacheth any thing contrary to our natural Notions.

WITH respect to the Meetings of Priests in their Councils, Convocations, General Assemblies, Synods, and Presbyteries, his Enemies record this *Bon Mot* of his, * *That he never knew any Good to come from the Meetings of Priests.* But his own words of the second General Council of Nice, more fully show his Judgment of the Authority of such Bodies: † *That if a General Council of Atheists had met together with a design to abuse Religion, by talking ridiculously concerning it, they could not have done it more effectually.* But nothing can exceed the Freedom, Courage, and Honesty of what he says elsewhere; ‡ *That if all the great Mathematicians of all Ages, ARCHIMEDES, and EUCLID, and APOLLONIUS, and DIOPHANTUS, &c. could be suppos'd to meet in a General Council, and should there declare in the most solemn manner, and give it under their Hands and Seals, That twice two did not make four, but five; this would not in the least move him to be of their mind.*

LASTLY, He not only asserts our Right to think freely, but expresses his Asto-

* Letter to a Convocation-Man, p. 8.

† Rule of Faith, p. 251.

‡ Six Sermons, p. 13.

nishment at our *Stupidity*, for allowing it to be call'd in question. Says he, * *Our best Reason is short and imperfect: but since it is no better, we must make use of it as it is, and make the best of it.* And he has often wonder'd that People can with patience endure to hear their Teachers and Guides talk against Reason; and not only so, but they pay them a greater Submission and Veneration for it. One would think this but an odd way to gain Authority over the Minds of Men; but some skilful and designing Men have found by experience, that it is a very good way to recommend them to the Ignorant, as Nurses use to endear themselves to Children by perpetual Noise and Nonsense.

I CANNOT close this Account of *Free-Thinkers* better than with this excellent Person; because no *Free-Thinker* will be disturb'd to share with him in the Reproaches of *Atheism*, *Libertinism*, or any other groundless or sanctify'd Calumnies; or be concern'd for his Reputation among any, except those who have such a degree of *Understanding* and *Morality*, as to value a Person whose *Works* tend so much to the Improvement of those things, wherein alone consists the *Perfection of Man*.

* Sermons, since his Death, vol. 1. p. 68, 69.

I MIGHT in like manner have instance'd in ERASMUS, Father PAUL, JOSEPH SCALIGER, CARTESIUS, GASSENDUS, GROTIUS, HOOKER, CHILDINGWORTH, Lord FALKLAND, Lord HERBERT of Cherbury, SELDEN, HALES, MILTON, WILKINS, MARSHAM, SPENCER, WHITCHCOT, CUDWORTH, MORE, Sir W. TEMPLE, and LOCKE; but that I am afraid I have been already too tedious: and besides, they are all already known for their Penetration, Virtue and *Free-Thinking*, to those who apply themselves to the reading of the best modern Authors, and even by Fame to others. I will only add, That as I take it to be a difficult, if not impossible Task, to name a Man distinguish'd for his Sense and Virtue, and who has left any thing behind him to enable us to judg of him, who has not given us some proofs of his *Free-Thinking*, by departing from the Opinions commonly receiv'd (as indeed every Man of Sense who thinks at all must do, unless it can be suppos'd possible, when Opinions prevail by mere *Chance* without any regard to *Reason*, that *Reason* and *Chance* should produce the same effect;) so I look upon it as impossible to name an *Enemy* to *Free-Thinking*, however dignify'd or distinguish'd, who has not been either Crack-

M

brain'd

As I
have heard
of J. A. N.
ton.

brain'd and Enthusiastical, or guilty of the most Diabolical Vices, Malice, Ambition, Inhumanity, and sticking at no means (tho ever so immoral) which he thought tended to God's Glory and the Good of the Church; or has not left us some marks of his profound Ignorance and Brutality.

THUS, SIR, I have endeavour'd to execute your Commands, and give you free leave to make any use you please of what I have written, with this Limitation, That if you think so well of it as to commit it to the Press, you would conceal your Name, and let it go abroad without the Credit of your Approbation: For I think it Virtue enough to endeavour to do Good, only within the bounds of doing your self no Harm. I am

Yours, &c.

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AN
ACCOUNT
OF A
DISCOURSE

AT THE
Græcian COFFEE-HOUSE,

On February the 11th 17¹²₁₃.

Occasion'd by

Dr. ~~Bentley~~'s Answer to the Discourse of *Free-thinking*.

In a LETTER from George Paul, M. A. and Fellow of *Jesus* College in Cambridge, to Francis Dickins, LL.B. and Fellow of Trinity-Hall in the same University.

*—Fruat hac opprobria nobis
Si dici poterant, etiam potuisse refelli.*

L O N D O N :

Printed for H. Clements, at the Half-Moon in St. Paul's Church-Yard. 1713.

ACCOUNT
OF
DISCOVERIES

IN THE
WEST INDIES

IN THE
ISLANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

IN THE
ISLANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

IN THE
ISLANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

IN THE
ISLANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

IN THE
ISLANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN



A N
ACCOUNT
OF A
DISCOURSE
AT THE
Græcian Coffee-House,
On February the 11th, 17¹²₁₃.

London, Thursday, Feb. 12. 17¹²₁₃.

My Good Friend,



PON the Discourse we had
on *Monday* Night about *Phileutherus's* Answer to *Free-
Thinking*, I could not forbear
calling for it the next Mor-
ning, in Hopes of deceiving the Fatigue

of an unpleasant and tiresome Journey, which I expected, (and I found it worse than I expected) by so grateful a Companion in the Evening. But when I got in here, which I did not till after seven, I found my self past receiving Pleasure from any thing of that Nature, I mean reading, and had nothing to do with my wearied Eyes and Limbs, but to compose 'em to Sleep. Finding the next Morning, what indeed I suppos'd, that the Book was not yet come to Town, instead of paying a Visit to the *Gracians*, to see what Effects it might have wrought upon the Countenances of the Persons suppos'd to be concern'd, which you remember was mentioned in Merri-ment, I resolv'd with my self to go thither, and if I found Mr. C---n, to offer him the Use of my Copy, as for last Night. Accordingly I refus'd to lend it to any body Yesterday, and although I had not found time to read any thing besides the *Preface*, and two or three Passages here and there my self, I went to the *Gracians* in the Evening to make good my Resolution. When I enquire how it came into my

Mind

Mind to endeavour to offer it to him, before I would lend it to any of my Friends, or though I should not have Leisure to go through it my self, I find I neither did it with an Intention to insult him, as with a thing that might mortify him, nor to complement him as with an acceptable Rarity, but in hopes to gratify his Fancy with something that might at the same time do him good. Well! but after I had for some time expected this Gentleman, who should jump in upon me but Mr. ———, I immediately seiz'd upon him, and got him to a part of the Room the remotest from Company, with Design to do him no more Harm than the other if he had been there, and with Hopes of obliging him as much. After accustomed Civilities, and a little Raillery upon our Meeting at that Place, I first, in the decentest manner I could, drew him to talk of *Cambridge*, and the extraordinary manner with which he took his leave of many of his Acquaintance and Friends, and of his Behaviour to some worthy and sober Persons besides, both then and probably at other times. I seem'd to wonder that
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a Gentleman who appear'd to propose such worthy Ends in his Travels, and whose genteel Appearance, good Parts, and Attainments in liberal Knowledge, might so easily have gain'd him the Acquaintance and Friendship of all the Persons of Learning and Worth amongst us, should instead of that, take such Measures, as to deprive himself not only of the Acquaintance of many such, but even of the good Word of some. I chose at first to apply my self thus to the prudent part of the Business, reserving the higher Concern till afterwards. As for the good Manners of it, 'tis so delicate a Point, that I was unwilling to touch upon it with a Person I have had no Intimacy with, and consequently can have little more than a general Concern for. He seem'd to think I might, in this general Expostulation, bear a special Regard to one particular Person, but tho' I assur'd him I meant no body in particular, he proceeded to distinguish one Person from all others, whom he suppos'd I meant. My View with him for the present, was to bring him to give me leave and room to explain his Conduct

duct in such a manner, as might serve to lessen, if not take wholly away, the Prejudices he had left against him, and the Offences he had given. What he said to me, in answer to these Particulars, was not what I was entirely satisfy'd with, and therefore I don't know whether I should tell you the several things he did say, or mention any more of the Discourse we had for about two Hours in that Place. However, I think I ought first to acquaint you with that which gives Occasion to my sending you an Account of this length, and at this time. I cannot recollect the very Place and Circumstances he brought it in with, but he gave me to understand, that as earnest as I was with him in my Expostulations, in my justifying Offences taken at him according to my own Measures of judging and resenting, and in my Arguments upon the true Merit of the Affair against him, I my self was not wholly free from Reflections of the same Nature, at the same Place; that he had more than once, and from many particular Persons, heard me censur'd, as not Orthodox, or as he vary'd it to
the

the same Sense, Heretical. When this Matter was hinted in the midst of our Talk, whether I thought it a piece of Banter, or that he mistook or misapply'd the Words, or the Sense, or the manner in which they might be spoke, or that I was held in Suspense upon so new and unexpected a thing, and of that kind; I am certain I was very strangely affected, and laboured under a Confusion of Thought, which I found I was not like to separate and clear my self through at that time, and in that Place, so that I said little (I am sure) to it, but what that little was, I don't know; I hope, and I dare engage for my self, I said nothing that might give him any reason to think I should not be affected with a thing of that nature, in the manner every honest Christian ought, and as I hope I need not persuade you to believe I am. You apprehend in what Sense I must necessarily take the words *Orthodox* and *Heretical*, viz. in the same as those of a Christian and a Free-Thinker, in the late abused Sense of that word. For besides that I almost think I heard him use the last Expression, the Relation of
this

this Observation of his to the Subject of our Discourse, a Particular he mention'd at the same time, puts me out of all Hopes of a more favourable Meaning, which Particular was, that my having said I had been forty times with Mr. C---s, was either an Occasion of such a Judgment's being at one time made upon me, or alledg'd as the Ground of it. As for the Oddness of the Terms, they might have been so apply'd designedly, or accidentally, or ignorantly. The particular Persons determining of me so exceedingly to my Wrong, I neither do know, (nor will ever know if I can help it) nor so much as suspect; 'tis sufficient that I have great reason to think they were Clergymen: And tho' there are *Blacks of different Prices*, as well as *Purples*, yet there is no body in that Colour, that I can think of as concern'd here, whose Opinion ought not to affect me. One Person indeed was voluntarily named to me, and he is one, whose Opinion of me almost in any respect, I do as much value, as that of any one of his Order, which I happen'd to say before,

B

fore, and repeated it, not less heartily, after this Matter was spoke of: But as his Expressions and Manner were distinctly represented to me, I have that Confidence in my own Innocency, and his Candour, Truth, and good Judgment, that I shall very easily wipe off any Prejudice of that sort against me, which any Infirmities or Indiscretions on my Part, may have given him an Occasion to receive. So far therefore I presume my self acquitted. For your self, my old Friend, let me tell you, I will make you no preposterous Complements of personal Respect and Partiality to me in this matter. I know the Fervour of your Zeal for Religion. I look upon you as severe in your self, and as much prevented against me in this Respect, as any honest Man in the World. I have known you as long, I have discours'd with you as often, and oppos'd you (in words many time when I might think with you) as freely, as crudely, and as widely in religious Matters, as I have any Man, and I verily believe, much more. Amongst my many other Failings, a too eager Forwardness to oppose others, bespeci- ally

ally such as in my own Opinion are but my Equals or Inferiors upon the Arguments, I own to be one. I am sensible I am sometimes driven in the full and rapid Torrent of those Spirits, if not to perplex some in their Judgment of the Truth in question, who may happen to be unprovided with proper Proofs, or more unskilful in the Management of such as they have, than my self; at least, to prejudice others against my own Sincerity or Judgment. I hope I do not deceive my self, when I think I never once have meant any Injury to Truth it self, or to the real Good and Happiness of any Person in giving way to this *Penchant* of my Mind. But still 'tis a Weed of human Nature, which neglected, may become pernicious enough, and tho', I do confess, pretty deeply rooted in mine, I hope by truer Reflections, constant Endeavours, and the divine Assistance, to master it by Degrees. But the Case of my Differences with you, has been quite of another Nature. 'Tis possible one may be inconveniently, nay, even to a Fault, in the Right, and in such Instances, Opposition will be found Friendship and Duty. Now

give me leave to say, I never yet knew a Man of your Sense, Honesty, and good Nature, adhere so tenaciously, securely, and, I was like to have said, implicitly to the religious Notions you have receiv'd, and carry severer Thoughts against any who disagree with you, or appear to do so. But although the Truth and Excellency of the Religion of the Country we live in, be certainly such, as to make this Disposition under it, very safe to your self, and not injurious to others, (I mean as to the Truth of the Revelation itself) and tho' the Care of your Parents, and Friends, and Teachers, and the Circumstances of all parts of your Education and Life, may have been so happily right, as that in the distinct Interpretation and Application of the revealed Truth, you may be also free from Errors or Scruples of Moment, yet what Consequences may not such a Passiveness as you use to insist upon here, have upon those, who were born, or bred up, in other Countries, of a different Religion; or who, in our own, have necessarily had different, and worse Circumstances of Instruction and Conversation? And the Arguments you can use, must (I am afraid)

afraid) without begging what is in question, hold as strongly for Acquiescence in the one Case as in the other. Now if I have endeavour'd, by such Arguments as I thought most likely to do it, to free you from an Opinion, and Temper, capable of such Consequences, as I thought I plainly saw, but were unattended by you; I hope I have so far done neither your self, nor (the Truth any Harm. I am sure I meant none. But however that be, I have jarr'd with you so often upon these Subjects, and explain'd my Meaning in it, hitherto, so little, that I can expect no Favour from you in the present Case. Yet I persist to make Choice of you, to convey these my Thoughts, to such Persons of Worth and Reputation in *Cambridge*, as you think, or know, or can discover, to have taken, or express'd, any Prejudices against me, and to make them prevail to my Justification. I have, you know, at certain times, been easy enough under some things concerning my Reputation; I have, perhaps, either from a false Notion of the thing, or a real, tho' unobserv'd Pride of Heart, or a Laziness,

ness and Security of Complexion; shewn, in some Cases, too great a Contempt or Negligence of uncharitable and unworthy Reflections upon me. But in any thing of this kind, tho' a good Conscience is equivalent to a thousand Witnesses, and alone sufficient to satisfy me, as to any real and essential Evil; yet I am convinc'd, that it may be a Duty and Justice to my self, and others, both to those who have censur'd me, and to those who may have been any ways affected with the Knowledge of it, to produce, as far as I can with Truth, what may serve in any manner, to wipe off such thick Blots as these, from my Christian Name. But, as I hinted before, I except from this my regard, all such Persons, if there be any such concern'd, who being unworthy in themselves, may have wrong'd me, either from an uncharitable Rashness, or ev'n against their real Opinion, or with any other unworthy Circumstances. The Characters such Men give, ought to have no value set upon them, nor not by those whom they abuse; they have no Right to be inform'd of the Truth, nor indeed do they desire it.

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As far, and as much, as I can recollect, or know of my self, in these respects, there is no Subject, since I have reflected at all, that I have read, and consider'd, more, and more carefully of, than that of the Foundations and Essentials of Christianity; and I know nothing that is capable of being brought into the Comparison, of the Truth and Excellency of which, I have come to Conclusions of fuller Satisfaction and higher Joy. *Monfieur l'Abadie* upon this Subject, was the first particular Book of the kind that I met with. This Book I read while I was undergraduate, and chiefly upon his Arguments, (tho' occasionally consulting Dr. *Sherlock* and others,) in two of the three Positions which are to be defended in the Sophister's Act, I endeavour'd to maintain the *Existence of God* and his *Providence over the World*. In a Retreat soon after from my College, for a twelvemonth, you have heard what Occasions I had given me to consider farther, and converse upon those Matters, and to give Proofs, of my Steadyness, at least, and a proper Zeal in such Tryals. Upon my Return to College, as far as one's private

vate Studies and Sentiments can be made known by publick Testimonies, I continued in the same Searches, and proportionable Convictions. Much the greatest part of my *Chapel Exercises* were always of this sort; I will mention those that occur at present to my Memory. *Permissio mali non ledit divina attributa*, particularly against the famous *Free-thinker* and Reviver of the Objections of the Heretick *Manes*, and his Follower's, *Mons. BAYLE*. *Diluvium Noachi fuit Univerſale*. *Ad fidem Moſi de diluvio faciendam non opus eſt alienâ Hypotheſi*. *Gentes Americanas ab Noachi poſteris ortos eſſe nil vetat*, against *Dr. BURNET* of the *Charter-Houſe*. *Fuiſſe homines ante Adamum, nec recta ratio ſuadet, nec ſana Hiſtoria teſtatur*, in Opposition to *Free-thinking Pyrrerius*. *Religioni Chriſtiana, prædicando expoſitæ, aſſenſum negantibus, ob ſolam infidelitatem, pœnæ infligi merito poſſunt*. And of the very laſt I perform'd, this was one of the Subjects, viz. *Religio Chriſtiana, tantum habet fidei ab externis Teſtimoniis, quantum jure requiri poteſt*. And that you may not think I am grown an Apoſtate from my ſelf ſince theſe Occaſions, I have thought
upon

upon my next Performances of this kind for the present Term, and they would probably have been to this Effect: The one, That *the Passage over the RED SEA was certainly miraculous, and could not be effected by the natural Causes of a low Ebb and a strong Wind*, according to Mr. le Clerc and others before him; and the other, That *the Blackness of the Æthiopians in Africa does not prove them to have been sprung from common Parents, different from those of the rest of Mankind*. But you will say, I have all this time offer'd at no special Proofs of my Conviction of the Excellency of the *Christian Morals*, what I have said, relating only to the *Truth of the Revelation*; but as that seems to be included in this part, and consequently the less needs a particular Regard, so 'tis much more easily demonstrable *a posteriori*, and upon that Account has been very little oppos'd, and with very inconsiderable Force, either by the old or the modern Infidels and Scepticks. The chief Exceptions of the ancient Enemies of Christianity have been pretended to be taken against it as a monstrous Superstition, (tho' from those of 'em who

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were

were Heathens ridiculously and inconsistently enough) and few or none of the most inveterate of 'em, ever objected against its *moral*, but upon such absurd and extravagant Suggestions as sufficiently declar'd they could not believe themselves. But altho' I never had any Scruples in my self; and hardly ever met with any open or avow'd Objections from others against our Religion in this Respect, yet for the pure Contemplation of Truths of so great Dignity and Importance, I have not, according to my poor Measure of Judgment and Knowledge, been backward in considering the Nature and Reason of the *Christian Duty* also; and upon the fairest and justest Comparison I could make of it, with all other Revelations of the same Nature from Heaven, or Discoveries of Men, (as far as I have been able to find them out, and understand them,) I found Reason to conclude, what I have also acknowledg'd in the same publick manner. viz. That *Virtus Christiana, cùm Hebræâ tum Ethnicâ [multo magis Mahomedicâ] perfectior est & excellentior*. I confess, tho' I have very carefully read and examin'd the *Stoical Scheme*

Scheme particularly, and found it indeed, what I had receiv'd it to be, *viz.* the most manly, and most elevated, and (excepting some few splendid Extravagancies, and that one unnatural and frantick Bravado of the Lawfulness, and, in some Cases, Duty of Self-Murder,) sufficient to state and preserve the Dignity of human Nature here, and the nearest to the Evangelical Perfection; yet I never once thought of comparing it with *Epicurus's Moral*. Indeed I could never hope for any thing truly worthy, from Principles implying an entire Disregard both for God or Man. And as I never heard, that this Philosophy, has of it self, done much Harm in the World, so I have always thought it incapable of doing any good, unless by Chance. A *Great Wit* (and it seems *Free-thinker*) of *France*, I am told, has found or made an exquisite System of Morality in *Epicurus's* Doctrine; but *Great Wits* can do any thing. I do not charge *Epicurus* himself, or his genuine Opinions, with the common Prejudices concerning him or them; but if his so much extoll'd Idea of *Friendship*, be no more just and noble than his Account of Love is in

Lucretius, I would not trust the *Friendship* of my dearest Epicurean Friend, with the Love of my Sister, or any other Woman whose *Virtue* and *Reputation* I would have secur'd, no not for a quarter of an Hour. But altho' I have satisfy'd my self upon these particular Points, and upon all others of the same Nature and Importance, where I have found my self Master of the Subject in all its parts, and finish'd my Examination of it; yet I would not be thought to presume to have made a thorough and absolute Disquisition into the whole Series, these great Truths. But as soon as my Health and Opportunities, will allow me, to set about the acquiring of so much Skill in the *Mathematicks*, in the *Knowledge of Time*, and of the *Original Language of the Old Testament*, as may be sufficient to carry me through all Difficulties depending upon such things, in their proper Places, without trusting to the Calculations and Authorities of others; I purpose then, (with the divine Blessing) to enter upon a closer and more complete Course of these Studies, from which I have so much Reason confidently to promise to my self the most solid,

solid, and most ample Pleasure and Contentment. And altho' this be so far from being necessary to my Vindication, that it is either utterly foreign to it, or in some Measure (perhaps) against it; yet I am not afraid to own, I have considered all the *Objections against these Truths*, that have either come in my way, or I have been directed to; and upon my freeest and fairest Tryal of them, I have found them, so far from weakening my Belief; that for the future I shall ev'n seek after them, in Expectation of adding Strength to it, by their Weakness. It might be invidious to be more particular here, and I suppose this Point will be easily granted me. But what I have been saying all this while for my self, subsists only upon my own Professions, (you will tell me) and some Appeals to Occasional Exercises, in which every Body is oblig'd to countenance sound Truths; whatever be their real Thoughts, and therefore you require Arguments and Examples of a more private and less uncertain Nature, to furnish you out with competent Materials for my Defense. To this I must demur a little. I have considered Christianity

stianity all along, with distinct respect
 to its *Belief*, and its *Manners*. I do
 not know whether my Notions have
 been question'd with regard to one, or
 both, or which of 'em. But as to the
 latter; altho', I must grant, that the
 most natural, and generally the cer-
 tainest Evidence that can be given, of
 a *right Opinion*, is a *virtuous Life*, yet
 I can't think, that, the only Proof it
 can receive; or that 'tis so essential to
 it, as to rise and sink with it, in a due
 Proportion. I will presume to say,
 that no Person living, can have a higher
 Veneration for the Rules of Life, pre-
 scrib'd by our holy Religion, or a more
 plentiful Persuasion of their Excellency
 in themselves, or suitableness to us,
 than my self have. And yet, I must
 confess, I am not able to produce such
 Arguments for it, as will be expected in
 the strictness of that supposition. Cer-
 tainly, an unbiass'd, and just Under-
 standing, may consist with a weak and
 deprav'd Will; or an uncorrupted Will,
 with violent and disorderly Passions and
 Affections. Constitution of Body, Com-
 plexion of Mind, Method of Living, and
 many other Causes, either singly, or at
 least

least united, may sometimes prevail, if not absolutely to force, yet very dangerously to attempt the soundest Resolutions. And I take this possible State of human Mind, to be shadow'd in those Expressions in the *Holy Writings*, wherein the *Spirit* is said to be *willing*, but the *Flesh*, *weak*; the one to *lust*, that is, (as I conceive it) *to will* or *to be willing* (the original Word, in its first and proper Signification, signifying no more (probably) than *Libere* and *Libido*, viz. only a free, or (if the Expression will bear itself out) willing Act of the Will,) contrary, or in Opposition to the other; and when mention is made of a *Law in the Members* warring against that of the *Mind*. But in whatsoever the abstracted Nature of this Repugnancy consists, I am assur'd, I experimentally know, 'tis no otherwise in effect. *Ignava opera Christiana sententia*, is the highest pitch the Imperfection of my Nature can as yet mount up to: And if I should be tax'd as self-condemn'd on this Account; and my Case made so much the more odious, as by my own Acknowledgment I go on to resist greater Lights, and stronger Convictions; tho' this be not

so directly pertinent to the present Question, which is solely of my Belief; and seems rather to include that as granted; yet I am otherwise concern'd enough in the Issue, to admit it into Consideration: and if it be meant, that of two Persons of equal Capacities, and Means of Information, his Guilt is the greater, who altho' he believes and approves the wholesome Truths of his Religion; is yet carried on, by Causes not so much in his Power, to act inconsistently with his Principles; then is that of him, who neither believes, nor approves, nor practises, them; which I take to be the true State of this Case; I hope I do not deceive my self in a Matter of so great and near Concern, but I am as yet persuaded of the quite contrary, for altho' such Pleas, will of themselves be far from acquitting either, since neither of them can pretend Necessity; yet certainly the last has more to answer for. He has suffer'd both his *Will* and his *Understanding* to be corrupted, or rather has corrupted both; whereas the other has preserv'd the Soundness of the latter, tho' he owns he has yielded too much Occasion to the perverse Habits

bits of the former. Not to mention what we are taught to believe, *viz.* that that 'tis the *Will* (so it is and must be explain'd) and not the *Understanding*, which being originally and naturally evil, or inclin'd to be so; necessarily finds those Cloggings and Incumbrances in the Execution of its *Being*, which the other is, in its own nature, free from. Upon the whole, I fancy you would rather, with me, wish your Soul with an *Erasmus* or a *Colet*, a *Pierce* or a *Donne*, than with a *Hobbs* or a *Bent*, a *Bayle* or a *Shaftesbury*.

But I have dwelt longer upon this point, than, I hope, I had occasion to do upon my own account: and indeed I do not know if I should have taken it up at all, had not I very lately heard this Scruple from the inconsistencies of Mens *Lives* with their Professions of Belief, much insisted upon in a certain occasion, which you will easily divine. Therefore this Suggestion, which I voluntarily made, I would fain believe, I have as effectually avoided. As for all other sorts of Arguments for one's right notions in this *Practical Part*; they are of the same nature, and will be con-

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der'd in common with those that refer to the other. And there I suppose it demanded of me as before; to wit, what more concluding, and less precarious Arguments I can bring for my Purgation, than those naked Professions and Appeals which have been already made. I can satisfy this request no otherwise, than by setting forth, in good faith, what I can remember and be positive to; as to my open Behaviour in this View, wherever I have been conversant; and by challenging all the World, who know me, as I here boldly do, to declare the worst they believe of me in these respects: which if I don't account for, as much to the Satisfaction of you and all honest and sensible Men, as I either have, or hope to do before I have done, that which refers to what I have so lately learnt from the place where you are, I will own my Opinions as justly suspicious as those of any Person who cannot clear himself from the Opinions, of others about him. And these are Proofs the most private that can be brought: for the most internal degree of Privacy, besides that which abides in the Mind itself, is so far publick, as to be

be only declar'd by Words and Actions.

'Tis not before the Heat of Youth and Vigour of the sensitive Faculties begins to abate, that we think or talk at all, much less coolly, and distinctly, and willingly, of speculative Matters; and still much less (I doubt) of those of Religion. And therefore I don't know, but it was accidental, that when I was so young as I was while I resided in the North, I could give some Proofs of my neither being wholly unacquainted with that Subject, nor avoiding it when offer'd, and, at proper Seasons, of my entering upon it of my own accord. I appeal to the whole Family in which I liv'd at *Middlethorp*, for the Truth of this; and to the young Gentleman particularly, of whose Education I had, for some little time, the Care. Nay I can farther ask him, if it were not often, on *Sundays* especially, the Theme of our Conversation, to talk of the *Loveliness* and *Reasonableness* of the *Christian Virtues*, and of the *Truth*, *Reverence*, and *Authority* of its *History*, *Miracles*, and *Mysteries*. Nay farther yet, whether I did not endeavour to govern the Affe-

tions and Propensions of his Youth, by reminding him often of his respective Duty, as a Son, a Creature, and a Christian; and whether, which will perhaps be thought more than all the rest, I set him an ill Example. And to all this, I expect his Declaration, with the same Sincerity and strict Truth, with which I acknowledge his uncommon Proficiency for those very young Years, in Learning, Virtue, and the Knowledge and Practice of Religion; which I do not mention, as a Bribe to engage his giving any such Testimony of me, but as a Justice to his Genius and Merit. Since the time I left *Yorkshire*, some few Rambles interpos'd, which you know I delight in: My Residence has been divided betwixt this Place and the *University*, tho' settled, if any where, only at the last. As at that Place, which our Enemies will own, very few private Occasions are given for defending one's Religion (and where no Occasions are administer'd there is certainly no proper Place to explain, or prove, or profess our right Understanding in such Matters,) so 'tis not to be wonder'd, if in a Body of so many

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Grave and Learned *Clergymen*, a *Layman* and a *young Man*, should be able to make no great boasts of that kind.

*Enough for us with our Lay, humble
Pains,*

*To trim their Vestments, or bear up
their Trains.*

On the contrary, if there be any Place where it may be innocent or commendable, to endeavour, in certain respects, to slacken the Zeal of some honestly meaning Men for the Truth it self; 'tis most likely to be there. And yet, I believe, many worthy Men of my Acquaintance will bear me witness, that I have not been shy upon suitable Occasions, to shew my own Zeal in that Place, and especially in the lately reviv'd Question, of the Existence of *Witches*, rightly understood and stated, yet so as to suppose and include preternatural Causes, in the disbelieving of which, (with Contempt of the odd, unmannerly Railery of the Defenders of *Free-thinking*;) I shall always think the Being of separate Spirits, or the Power of God over the Creation,
or

or his Existence, or the faith of all History, Holy and Prophane, Ancient and Modern, to be question'd, accus'd, or ridicul'd. But in this Place, where it has long been customary, and is now become fashionable to dispute the great Truths of Christianity with all and more than imaginary Freedom: I am not bold to say, that I have in season, and out of season, as induc'd by the Opportunity, or mov'd by my Temper; endeavour'd to prove and vindicate those Truths, by which I hope to be sav'd, and of which, (I think) I have so clear and full a Conception. And of this, I believe, I could be as particular, as can be desir'd, if it were proper to make such Incidents publick without the last Necessity. I do not pretend to have always behav'd my self in these Tryals, with Advantage to so good a Cause, much less with Reputation to my self. No, I know my weak sides, and how apt I am by a natural Impatience of minute Proofs, and long Deductions, in Cases clear to my self; to lose the right View, or betray my own Forces: and especially when that Impatience is heightened, by little Cavils,
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and mean Advantages taken on the other side. But these, tho' they may discover my Inabilities to serve it effectually, are no Instances of my Disaffection to the Christian Cause. I remember one voluntary Zeal of this nature, of which, because I can mention it without Inconvenience, or Suspicion of Affectation; you shall have the Story, with the Names of the Persons concern'd. *Mons. BAYLE's Critical Dictionary*, tho' for the main Subject of it, pretty much to my own Palate, I ever thought a Book of as pernicious, as well as impertinent a kind, as could fall into the Hands of Common Readers. 'Tis that Writer's peculiar manner; to treat of all Subjects without Distinction, not only with absolute Freedom, but with boundless Licence. He gathers together all that can be said upon the respective Question, without determining, or perhaps knowing, or possibly troubling himself on which side the Truth lies. Or if he does at any time extend himself more than ordinarily, or come nearer to a Decision on one side, 'tis great Odds but 'tis against the *receiv'd Notion*. Let it be understood

stood withal, that his Stile and Manner, is so familiar and lively in the Original, that he must, ev'n upon that account, be read with great Ease and Delight, in almost any Translation. But, which is most of all to the purpose; as he mixes a very large and ill sorted Proportion of *Religion*, with his *nick nacks* and *Curiosities of human Learning*, his most remarkable Prevarications and By-asses, are commonly found there. I know what is pretended by the *Writers of his Life*, to explain or colour over this Conduct. But the Fact is notorious and granted. I had heard there was a Design on Foot to set out this Author in *English*. I know not who encouraged this Undertaking, nor with what Design they did it. But it was obvious, what ill Effects, a Work answering this Description, and a worse in one respect, would probably produce in the Hands of the *Ladies*, and of the idle and illiterate part of our own Sex, for whose Convenience it could only be design'd. Being withal resolv'd of the unlikelyhood of its turning to any profitable account to the Undertakers, notwithstanding the Artifices and Recommendations

mendations which might be us'd to encourage the Sale, (in which, I hope, and believe, they have found me no rash Gueſſer,) I took all the Opportunities that came in my way, of discouraging the whole Deſign: both from the Point of Intereſt, and that of Chriſtian Duty; and for the truth of this, I appeal to the Memories of *Mr. Walthoe* and *Mr. Browne*, *Bookſellers near the Temple*, and to *Mr. Lewis* of *Covent-Garden* in particular. They ſeem'd to be affected with what I ſaid, as Chriſtians, if not as Tradeſmen; and perceiving one of 'em eſpecially, to ſeem ſo far convinc'd of what was ſuggeſted, as to be about reſolving to clear his Hands of his Concern in it, that I might confirm him in ſo good a Thought, I gave him ſome reaſon to believe, that if it did go on, ſuch a Specimen of the Miſtakes, Diſingenuities, and Impertinencies of the Verſion, the Book itſelf, or both of 'em, ſhould not fail to follow the Publication, as might poſſibly do little Kindneſs to the Sale. And I knew at that time, ſo much of the Original; and had heard ſo much of the Management of the

Translation; as to assure my self, I neither made an illintended, nor a vain Promise. That you may not mistake my drift here, as if I were against this *free-written Book*, purely as such, and thereby inconsistent with some of my own Insinuations before; and unwilling to allow the same *Liberty of Thought and Reading* to others, which, by my own Confession, I have taken my self: give me leave to explain this Matter a little, as it appears to me.

Freedom of Thought upon all Ideas without Exception, is in it itself, undoubtedly, of common Right. And as for those who are design'd to be set apart to teach, and explain them to others; These may possibly not only have a right, but lie under a Duty, to think freely, ev'n of the Foundations and first Principles of the Christian Religion: which, you know, was the excellent *Bishop Beveridge's* Opinion and Example: Nay farther; All *private Christians*, who shall have dubious Thoughts of these Matters, to the rise of which, they can't fairly be presum'd to have yielded through their own Fault, ought not to be debarr'd, of the right
of

of fatisfying themselves by proper means: but it does not therefore follow, that they are to be disquieted, and perplex'd in their receiv'd Notions, suppos'd to be true; or to have Occasions of Doubts and Scruples sought after, and thrown in their way; no more than it follows; that because, what a Woman with Child longs for, or a Person in a high Feaver craves after, may be indulg'd them at that time, tho' in itself improper and hurtful in their respective Cases; that therefore they ought to be put in mind of such things, or have them plac'd in their sight on purpose. But before I quite take my leave of *Mons. BARLE*, I'll give you a small sample of this admir'd Author's Disingenuity, or Superficialness; which once took my Eye upon a casual opening the Book. *Stephanus of Byzantium's Alphabetical Account of Cities and Nations*, is known to be defective in the Letters K. and Λ. Now *Joseph Scaliger*, had heard that *Sophianus*, a learned Man, and eminently skill'd in the *Greek Geography*, had a written Copy of this Book, in which these Letters were perfect. And in one of his *Latin Epistles*

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to his Friend *De-Laet*, tells him this News. “ *Sophianus*, says *Scaliger*, has an
 “ entire Copy, *integrum Exemplar* of
 “ *Stephanus*, cum toto K. & A. quæ hodie
 “ *imperfecta circumferri non ignoras*.
 But *Mons. BAYLE* is pleased to be thus
 witty upon his learned Countryman :
 “ *Scaliger*, says he, talks here after an
 “ odd Fashion, of an entire Manuscript
 “ of this Book, with the Letters K. and
 “ A. which, (*he facetiously thinks*,) is
 “ just as if he should say, such a one
 “ has read over the *whole New Testa-*
 “ *ment*, with the Gospel of *St. John*,
 “ and the *Acts of the Apostles*. But I
 believe you will rather think, that this
 Flirt of *Mons. BAYLE*, is either as if he
 would tell you a deliberate Untruth, or
 take upon him to critick upon two
 considerable and common Books at
 once, without having so much as look’d
 into either of ’em.

Now if I had no more to say; and
 should take no particular Notice of
 what I have heard has been objected a-
 gainst me, or do suppose to have been
 the Occasion of such Objections as I
 have not had a distinct Account of;
 you are able to make my Defence out
 of

of what has been said already. For in contrary Presumptions of equal Force; you know, better than I, that both Law and Equity favours the accus'd Party. And I am pretty confident, that it may be as fairly and strongly presum'd from what I have mention'd; not only of the trueness of my Opinions, but of the due Temper of my Zeal for them; as it can be of the contrary, from whatsoever has been, or may be, truly and candidly said against me in the same Respects. But, even by that little which I shall say more of this matter, I hope to convince you, that the Presumptions are not equal. The only particular Charge I know, and so can answer directly to, is my having, by my own Confession, been often in *Mr. C--n's* Company. This Confession, or Profession rather, for it was, as (I suppose) may be remember'd, entirely voluntary; you will think I should not have made; if I had been conscious of any Evil, or just Shame, either in the fact itself, which I acknowledge, or in my making it known. At my first coming to this Place with a prospect of making any stay here, I was recommended, by a
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Clergyman of my Acquaintance, to the *Gracian Coffee-house*, as to a Place where I should find much Satisfaction, in the Politeness and good Sense of the Company. I was so far not disappointed, that I met with many Persons of Eminence in their several Characters and Professions, and withal of considerable common Learning, and general Acquaintance with Books. As the Discourses there were generally in the learned and notional way, and very often of things of an indifferent Nature; I found no reason, in the main, to discontinue a Conversation, where I was often agreeably entertain'd, and from whence I never came away in the least alter'd, or stagger'd, in my Principles of Religion: but finding at last, the Subject of Conversation to turn more and more to Religion and Politicks, in which I was always worst satisfied there; this, with another Dissuasion, which prevail'd more with me upon the account of Piety, Zeal, and Friendship of the Person, than of the real weight of his Argument; determin'd me to frequent that Place no longer: and for some Years since, I have seldom gone thither, and
only

only occasionally. At that Place I began to know *Mr. C---ns*: with whom, as being known to be a Person of much mixt Reading, and great Freedom and Forwardness of Discourse, I had, about that time, frequent Conferences, either there, or at Booksellers Shops: And, at the last Places, I have had some accidental Talkings with him since. It would be impertinent here, and unwarrantable by all good Manners, to mention such Conversations more particularly than is requisite for one's reasonable Defence. Therefore you are only to know, that, upon almost every Point of *Morality, Religion, or Politicks*, or wheresoever the *Church, and Clergy*, and *Universities of England* were concern'd, we as certainly disagreed as we debated: and for this I could appeal to himself; who, I make no doubt, will thank me for an Opportunity of doing us both Justice. And here it comes into my mind, that there may be other Names lying under Prejudices, and perhaps just ones at the Place where you are, with whom I may have occasionally declar'd an Acquaintance; as I have never conceal'd any such. And truly I
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am inclin'd to think, this is the chief Handle that has been taken hold of to suspect me, as 'tis the most plausible one my Simplicity has giv'n. But if I had mention'd at the same times, or at other times more frequently than I have affected to do; the Names of many more Persons, of quite contrary Distinctions, whom I have had the Happiness and Honour to know, and could at any time appeal to; this exception would probably have been prevented: but now it shall have its full Force. And tho' the honest early Rule of *multum refert quibuscum vixeris* is certainly very just; yet to speak in the Language of Life, where you find, or think a Man sober, honest, good natur'd, and civil, or have no reason to suspect the contrary of him, you are not oblig'd to fly from him, or not to return common Civilities to him, upon account of his speculative Opinions or his Party. Nor if you should have reason to doubt of him in some ev'n of these respects, is it your Duty to forget his good Offices to you, or your own common Humanity. To take care that Goodness and Truth in general, receive no Detriment, seems to be the only
fix'd

fix'd Restraint which ought to be put upon us, or we ought to put upon our selves in our Society with the World. And 'tis possible, that a reserv'd, distant, and hostile Demeanour towards those who may differ from us in Opinions, or be our Inferiors in Virtue, may do Religion, and Goodness, and Mankind more Disservice, than the ends proposed in it, supposing them attain'd, can make amends for. And to return back one little Suspicion, I wish there be not often found, more *Ignorance of the World, Passion, Pride, Ill Nature, Cowardise, or Spleen*, than true *Piety*, or *Prudence* in such a *Zeal*. As for my self, I have that good Opinion of human Nature, as not very easily to suspect ill, and that Sense of my own Imperfections, as to be very difficultly brought to hate the *Persons* of the worst Men. And if this be an Error or a Crime, I have Confidence of infinite Mercies Pardon for it, because I dont find it in my Power to help it.

The only Point, besides this last, of which I am capable of taking express Notice, is what I mentioned before, as relating to a particular Person. At

first, I thought, out of the respect I bear him, to say nothing more of that here, but to wait for such an Opportunity as I am happy to have with him when ever I desire it, to explain it to himself: but considering, that the Occasion he had to speak of me was very probably publick, and that others may have thought or said the same; I shall take leave, out of the Regard I owe my self, to add this also to the rest here. It was affirmed of me, according to my Information, that I read *all sorts of Books*, and that I often pass'd *hasty and temerarious Judgments*, which was certainly true. Of the many Weaknesses which I am conscious of, and very uneasie under, my Manner of studying is not the least in it self, nor in my Sense of it. There are *Sensualities* and *Intemperances* of the *Mind* as well as the *Body*; and Infirmities and Distempers are the Consequences as well of those, as of these. I have therefore nothing to say or do in this respect, but to endeavour to profit by the Advice, and to return my Thanks to the Authors of so wholesome an Admonition. And the latter Part of the Observation was as just as the other,
being

being indeed no more than the almost necessary Result of it. I have been too apt, in common discourse, to talk crudely, and at random; either for want of having carefully and judiciously consider'd the Point before, or in order to do so the better afterwards, or led by the present Passion and Disorder of the Mind, without reflecting upon the true Merit of the Question, or possibly of the right State of it. But I hope, for the future, either to frequent Company less, or to be more silent in it, 'till I can come to a better Composure of Mind, and Command of Words, now I perceive the Consequence of it; and that there has been more Notice taken of me, than I had Vanity enough to think there could be. I neither know, nor trouble my self how my Informer understood these Expressions; nor in what manner he would have had me understand 'em. I heard only what the Words were: and as I am sure nothing could truly and justly be infer'd from those Premises, but what I have freely and specially own'd; so the worthy Person concern'd, has never given me any Occasion to impute an injurious mean-

ing, or a false reasoning to him.

Thus, my dear Friend, in the Hurry of my first Week in Town, at the Intervals of necessary Law Business, and by Scraps, in twenty different Places, publick and noisy enough, have I scribbled, as I could, this just and necessary Explanation, or Apology, I leave it to you to make the first and best Use of it in my Vindication.

I am, &c.



POST

P O S T S C R I P T.

I Have at last had Leisure to go thro' with *Phileleutherus*, and to consider some material Places of the *Discourse on Free-thinking*, with more Care and Attention, than I ran over the whole Book at its first coming out. If it be worth your while to have a Friend's Thoughts; the *Discourse*, to my Eye at least, lessens upon a nearer View. But *The Answer* has exceeded my Expectation. This would have been a plain reason for that, if I had not pass'd this Judgment before I set down to the *Answer*, or if I had form'd it only from those Places which are there attack'd. You know how often I have express'd my Admiration of *Phileleutherus*, in his Province of a Critick. I am now astonish'd, not only at these new and greater Discoveries of his *Genius* that way; but at his vast Compass, and clear Views of all Antiquity and Learning, sacred, as well as civil and classical. This is certainly the Person, to whom that hackney Complement to eminent Scholars, is, if it ever were, justly apply'd,

----*Cujus se pectore cuncta vetustas
Condidit, & major collectis viribus exit.*

If there be any thing above this Hero in Literature's Mastery, 'tis his own vast Parts and Learning. 'Tis possible the huge Size and Strength of his Abilities, may sometimes transport him beyond his own Scope, or the Necessity of the Subject, and give his little Envyers, and Adversaries an Opportunity of having something to reply, or to catch at. But I wish They, *isti alteri*, were capable of his Escapes or Redundancies. If after this sincere Profession, I should offer at a Remark where he has been before me; you might justly

justly accuse me, of a hardier Presumption, than any Simile or Proverb can come up to. And yet you must not wonder when you hear me say, he has not given me thorough Satisfaction in one or two particulars; not for want of Learning or Judgment, but by not using the Opportunities of exercising and applying them. In effect, he does not seem to come up to my *Orthodoxy* in the Points of *Witchcraft* and *Oracles*. But of this more, and particularly on some other Occasion. There are also some other Passages in *Free-thinking*, either pass'd over by *Phileleutherus* as not within his Purpose, or being in that Part of the Book which he has not yet consider'd, that I may find an Opportunity to give you my Thoughts of. Amongst these, there is one of Consequence; and that is, *Josephus's* Notion of the *Passage of the RED SEA*, as cited and observ'd upon by this Author. As to which, I here engage, (provided we hear no more of *Phileleutherus*, and be not prevented by some other hand to whose greater Abilities it will become such as my self to give way; and especially if you desire it,) when I get to my Books and Papers, and a little Leisure, to make out, and ev'n demonstrate, from Nature, History, and the thing it self, that the foremention'd *Passage*, was entirely miraculous, and had scarce any thing in common with that of *Alexander's Army from Lycia into Pamphylia*; and this against *This Writer, Le Clerc, Josephus* and all the *Freethinkers* in the World, or if it be still insisted upon, and admitted, that they were *both alike*, I promise to prove *both miraculous* even against *Alexander* himself. This sounds like a bold Challenge indeed, it will be said; but I would have you answer for me, in these Words of another of my favourite old Poets, a little alter'd for Application:

*Meek in his own, he scarce his Conscience trusts ;
But in TRUTH's Cause, a haughty Courage boasts ;
Great Alexander dares, and whole Free-think-
ing Hosts.*

At present, I will only detain you while I give one Instance of the *Free-thinkers* Spirit and Manner. One of the Instances of the *Clergy's Use of pious Frauds in publishing and translating Books*, which this Pretender to fair dealing is pleased to give, is that of *The Reverend Mr. Brown Rector of Sundbridge in Kent*; who in his English Translation of *Father PAUL's Letters*, which he printed in 1693, has, according to this Gentleman, *smother'd* the most remarkable and valuable Passages that are to be found in those Letters. Of these Omissions, he makes this that follows the most remarkable. *For the English*, says F. PAUL, *I fear, &c.* [See the Discourse of *Free-thinking*, pag. 95.] Now I will give you the true Account of this Matter, and leave it before you to judge betwixt *Mr. Brown* and his *Accuser*. The only Collection we have of F. PAUL's Letters consists of those which he writ in Italian to the *Sieurs Leschassier, Groslet de Lisle, Gillot*, and some others of his Friends in *France*. These were gather'd together, and preserv'd by one of the two last mention'd: and 'tis this Collection that *Mr. Brown* undertook to translate; in which, I suppose, this Adversary will not pretend that this Passage is to be found. But in that memorable Year 1641, one *Lewis du Moulin*, a rigid and bitter Calvinist, in a venomous Libel, which he then publish'd under a borrow'd Name, against Episcopacy, and its Patrons, and Defenders here in *England*; presents us with this Passage, by it self, in *Latin*, and gives it the Name of *Part of a Letter from F. PAUL to Mons. Leschassier*. Now suppose *Mr. Brown*
knew

knew this. He undertook and pretended only to translate a particular Collection of the Father's Italian Letters already made, and printed. And is he guilty of *Pious Fraud*, *Smothering*, *Corruption*, and *Omission*, for not finding out, and publishing with those, a scrap of a *Lain Letter*, without any good Voucher for its Genuineness? But it is certain that Mr. Brown knew of, and had seen this remarkable and formidable Passage: and yet, O the Imposture! O the Priestcraft! *Tantum Religio!*----- He has actually published it, Word for Word, in the only part of his Book, where he could do it without being impertinent. And for the truth of all this, I refer you to Mr. Brown's Preface, which, at your Leisure, you may compare with the 94th and 95th Pages of the Discourse. Having not the Book here, nor Leisure at present to seek after it, I can't direct you to the very Page; but you will find it in the Publick Library, and it may be worth your while to read the whole Preface over, for it has many other curious things in it. I shall not break my Promise to make no Harangue or Reflections upon so plain a Case, by observing only by the by, the Ungenerousness of the Discourser, in singling out Mr. Brown, to practise his Art upon. A Person deservedly famous for his Edition of a noble Collection, of truly illustrious and worthy Free-thinkers, under the Title of *Fasciculus rerum expetendarum & fugiendarum*; nor by just mentioning my Surprize at his slighting Character of F. PAUL's Letters, by making this Passage the most remarkable and valuable thing in them. You will understand my Meaning here, by comparing the Introduction to the Rights of the Christian Church, with a long Letter to Gillet, in this Collection; and which is, I think, the last in the Book.

REMARKS

Upon a late

DISCOURSE

OF

FREE-THINKING:

IN A

LETTER to F. H. D. D.

BY

Bentley

PHILELEUTHERUS LIPSIENSIS.

Perlegi Feb: 49.

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MDCCXIII.

REMARKS

Volume 1

DISCOVERIES

IN

THE TROPICAL

AND

ARCTIC REGIONS

BY

THE LIEUTENANT

OF THE

U. S. NAVY

THESE REMARKS WERE WRITTEN BY THE LIEUTENANT
OF THE U. S. NAVY, WHO WAS
IN THE SERVICE OF THE U. S. NAVY
FROM 1847 TO 1854.

To my very Learned and Honour'd
FRIEND F. H. D. D.

At LONDON,
GREAT-BRITAIN.

SIR,

THE Account you was pleas'd to send me, of your Publishing my former Remarks, and of the kind Reception they found among your Country-men, especially your Clergy, to whose Honour and Service they were peculiarly dedicated, was very agreeable. I am sensible, that before my Papers could come to your Hands, there must have been several better Answers, of your own Product at home. If Mine therefore was read with such Distinction, as you speak of; I must impute that good fortune to nothing else, than your known National Humour of admiring Forein Commodities, though you have better of your Native Growth. 'Tis a favorable Error however: and we Strangers often fare the better for't. But I am concern'd, that when every thing else pleas'd you; my Declaration at the close, That the Half of my Remarks was as much as the Whole, could not merit your approbation. Why do you thus press and teaze me, both against my Inclination and Interest, to continue those Papers? You acknowledg, enough is already said, to silence both the Book and the Author, both Himself and the whole Sect. You inform me, that he has fled the Pit, that all his Character for Sense and Learning is forfeited and dead: and if so; why impose upon Me that useless Cruelty of molesting him in his Grave? I may add too a Prudential View: I should stake what I have already won, against Nothing at all. If another Part succeeds as well as the First; I

acquire

acquire no New reputation: if it does not; I lose even the Old. Besides, the Subject it self is alter'd: the Former part of his Book contain'd matters of Consequence, and gave some Play to an Answerer; but the Latter is a dull Heap of Citations, not work'd nor cemented together, mere Sand without Lime: and who would meddle with such dry mouldring Stuff, that with the best Handling can never take a Polish? To produce a good Reply, the First Writer must contribute something: if He is quite low and flat, his Antagonist cannot rise high; if He is barren and jejune, the Other cannot flourish; if He is obscure and dark, the Other can never shine. And then you know my long Law Suit here, which is now remov'd to Dresden: and who would regard the Free-Thinkers, or willingly jade his own Parts, under such Clogs and Impediments? I find, when I set pen to paper, that I sink below my own Level: Quaerit se Ingenium, nec invenit. But if you'd had patience till my Trial was over (for Trial in my cause is the same as Victory) then perhaps your Growing Sect might have felt to their cost;

Et nos tela, pater, ferrumque haud debile dextra
Spargimus, & nostro sequitur de vulnere sanguis.
And yet after so many good Reasons, why I ought now to lie still: see the Power you have over me; when you both urge a Promise, and back it with the Desire of the Clergy of England. During the Vacation at our Leipsic Mart, I took up your Author; and begun where I left off before. I had thought indeed to dispatch his whole Book within the bulk of one Packet: but I have run out beyond my length, and must again stop in the Middle: though I hope you'll have more Conscience in the exercise of your Authority, than to require any Remainder from

Your most obedient Servant

Leipsic, Sept. 18. 1713.

Stilo novo.

PHILELEUTHERUS LIPSIENSIS

REMARK

XXXIV.

I Left my Author in his 90th Page, proving the duty and necessity of *Free-Thinking*, from the conduct of your *English* Clergy in Ten Instances. The VIIth was concluded with a Passage out of *Victor Tununensis*; which I hope is so fully clear'd and answer'd, that none of the Fraternity will hereafter vaunt of it, as they used to do, in Booksellers Shops.

His VIIIth Instance of their ill Conduct, is * Their dayly publishing of Treatises in Dialogue, where they introduce *Atheists*, *Deists*, *Sceptics*, and *Socinians*, speaking for their own opinions with the same strength, subtilty, and art, that those men show either in their books or conversation. Nay one of them (which makes the † IXth Instance) has translated *Lucretius*, the only compleat antient system of Atheism now extant, for the benefit of the *English* reader.

When I consider my self as a *Lutheran*, born and dwelling on the great Continent, I cannot but treat with scorn the weak efforts of this Writer, who while he attacks Christianity in common, brings arguments that reach no farther than Home, within the narrow compass of your own Island. But what, I pray, is the pretended Crime? or where does the wrong conduct lie? I had thought, that to propose objections with their full force, had been a certain sign both of fairness in the Writer, and as-

* Pag. 91. † Pag. 91.

furance of a good Cause. If they make Atheists talk with great *strength and subtilty*, do they not refute them with greater strength, and overcome subtilty with truth? This our Author denies not here: and if so, where is his *Own Conduct*? Before, * he had charg'd the Priests, *That they will not tell the Truth*, when it makes to their disadvantage: but here it seems, *they tell too much*, and give the utmost strength to their adversaries objections. Anon, he will tell us *of their smothering and stifling of Passages in their Translations*; but here the crime is quite contrary, That they translate even *Systems of Atheism* too openly and entirely. What cavilling? what inconsistency? This is exactly,

Quid dem, quid non dem?

Nolo, volo: volo, nolo rursum: cape, cedo.

Since nothing coming from your *English* Clergy can please this nice Author, neither whole Translations nor in part; I'll try, if a *Foreigner* can make him amends; when I rub in his nose, as I have done several already, some more of his *own Translations*.

XXXV.

But (for a *Xth* Instance) your Priests are guilty of *Pious Frauds in Translating and Publishing Books*; even the Holy Bible it self. For, says he, *Εκκλησία* is sometimes render'd *Church*, other times *Assembly*; and *Επίσκοποι* sometimes *Bishops*, other times *Overseers*: Whereas the same word in the Original ought to be translated *universally alike*. Notable Criticism; and vast penetration into the nature of languages! For to wave now, what the Translators of your Bible say on this very head in the close of their Preface; can

* Pag. 82. † Pag. 94, 95. ‡ Pag. 92. * Pag. 93.

our Writer be ignorant, that in all tongues whatever, a word of a Moral or Political signification, containing several complex Ideas arbitrarily join'd together, has seldom any correspondent word in any other language, which extends to all those Ideas? Nay, that in the same language most Moral words by tract of Time and instability of common Use either lose or gain some of their Ideas, and have a narrower or larger meaning in one age than in another? Physical words indeed, as *ἥλιος*, *Σελήνη*, *Θάλασσα*, whose significations are uncompounded and immutable, may be always express'd alike, *Sun*, *Moon*, and *Sea*: but the other sort ought not and cannot, without great ambiguity and absurdity. See the variety of *Εκκλησία* in *Greek*: it means the Place, the Building, for an assembly; it means an Assembly or Congregation in that place: thus in the ancient Heathen times: but in the Christian usage, besides these Significations, it means the Whole of a Town or City, who are wont to assemble in one or more such Places, whether they are actually assembled, or not; it means the Whole of a District, Diocese, Province, Nation; it means diffusively the whole Community of the Christian Name; it means the Governors of such Places, or Assemblies, or Districts, of one or more, of larger or less. And has your English language One single word, that is coextended through all these significations? The case is much alike in the other word *Επίσκοπος*. Let our Author then learn, before he sets up to teach. Had he read any good translation, antient or modern, could he possibly be so pedantic with his *Universally alike*? His own Book indeed is *universally alike*, a perpetual detail either of his own shufflings or mistakes.

But let us view his particular Texts. He's angry, that in *Acts* xix, 32. the word *Εκκλησία* is render'd *Assembly*, and not as usually the *Church*. *For, says he, in this place where it manifestly signifies *the People*, had the Translators said, *The Church* (instead of *Assembly*) *was confus'd, and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together; the Signification of the word Church would not have admitted of any doubt about its meaning.* Unfortunate blunderer! I cannot decide, whether there's more nonsense in his expression, or more stupidity in his remark. It's *signification*, says he, would admit of no doubt about it's *meaning*: that is, it's *signification* about it's *signification*. Well; but *Εκκλησία* there means *the People*; and had it been render'd *Church*, we should have known the *Church* had meant the *Laiety*, as well as the *Priests*. What Priest ever denied, that *Church* in your English Bibles does generally comprehend all believers, People as well as Clergy? But in this place, that *Assembly*, which he would call a *Church*, was a mob of *Pagans* got together in the *Town Theatre*, some for fear of their manufactures (as your Silkweavers once at *London*) and the most for they knew not what. And though *Εκκλησία*, which signifies Any *Assembly*, is properly and decently used here in the original: can your English word *Church*, that from its first rise has been consecrated to a religious sense, be extended to a heathen mutiny? This very Instance shews, what I said before in general, That the Political words in different languages are seldom totally equivalent, And those forein words, that are not interpreted but adopted and retain'd, as *Apostle*, *Bishop*, *Priest*, *Deacon*, have always a narrower sense, where they're transplanted, than in their first soil. And yet our

Writer adds seriously (for there's no mark of Raillery or Jest) that had the Translators done their duty in this Passage, there could have been no doubt about the meaning of the word *Church*. No doubt in the least: for if that Assembly could be call'd a *Church*, you would have *Churches* at your Opera's, *Churches* at Comedies; at Puppet-shows, at Masquerades. If he had taught your Parliament this Language; he might have sav'd the great charge of their Fifty new *Churches*: for with one Word he has built as many, as there are Coffee-houses in *London*; and, what is more, he has prov'd Himself and his Free-thinkers to be excellent *Church-Men*.

His other Exception is *Acts* xx, where οἱ πρεσβύτεροι τῆς ἐκκλησίας, * *The Elders, the Presbyters of the Church* (v. 17.) are said to be ἐπίσκοποι (v. 28.) *Overseers over all the Flock*. Here instead of *Overseers* he would have it render'd *Bishops*: that it might appear, that *Bishops* and *Presbyters* in Scripture phrase are synonymous words. And what if they should be so, *iidem* πρεσβύτεροι qui ἐπίσκοποι, the first the name of their Age and Order, the latter of their Office and Duty? Does he think to fright your Bishops with this? Does this affect the cause of Episcopacy? How then came *Theodorit* a Bishop, *Theophylact* an Archbishop, and *Chrysostom* a Patriarch, not to be aware of it; when they expressly affirm, what our Writer would have appear'd? They, with all Christian Antiquity, never thought themselves and their Order to succeed the Scripture ἐπίσκοποι, but the Scripture Ἀπόστολοι; they were Ἀγάδοχοι τῶν Ἀποστόλων, *the Successors of the Apostles*. The Summ of the Matter is this. Though new Institutions are form'd; new Words are not

coin'd for them, but Old ones borrow'd and applied. *Επίσκοπος*, whose general Idea is *Overseer*, was a word in use long before Christianity, a word of universal Relation, to Oeconomical, Civil, Military, Naval, Judicial and Religious Matters. This word was assum'd to denote the Governing and Presiding Persons of the Church, as *Διάκονος* (another word of vulgar and diffus'd use) to denote the Ministerial. The *Presbyters* therefore, while the Apostles liv'd, were *ἐπίσκοποι Overseers*. But the Apostles, in foresight of their approaching Martyrdom, having selected and appointed their Successors in the several Cities and Communities, as St. *Paul* did *Timothy* at *Ephesus*, and *Titus* at *Crete*, A. D. LXIV, four years before his Death; what Name were these Successors to be call'd by? Not *Ἀπόστολοι, Apostles*: their Modesty (as it seems) made them refuse it; they would keep that Name proper and sacred to the first *Extraordinary* Messengers of Christ; though they really succeeded them in their Office, in due Part and Measure, as the *Ordinary* Governors of the Churches. It was agreed therefore, over all Christendom at once, in the very next Generation after the Apostles, to assign and appropriate to Them the word *Επίσκοπος* or *Bishop*. From that time to this, that Appellation, which before included a *Presbyter*, has been restrain'd to a superior Order. And here's nothing in all this but what has happen'd in all Languages and Communities in the World. See the *Notitia* of the *Roman* and *Greek* Empires: and you'll scarce find one name of any State Employment, that in course of time did not vary from its primitive Signification. So that should our *Lutheran* Presbyters contend they are Scripture *Bishops*, what would they get by it? No more, than
lies

lies in the Syllables. The time has been, when a Commander even of a single Regiment was call'd *Imperator*: and must every such now a days set up to be *Emperors*? The one pretense is altogether as just as the other.

But to speak a word to his Version. He would have it *Bishops*, in *Acts*, xx, as it is in other places, and not *Overseers*. Our *Luther* indeed has translated it here and every where *Bischoffen*: but, if my Countrymen do not hear me, I must beg his excuse. *Bishop* and *Bischoff* give no internal Idea to an illiterate *Englishman* or *German*. As an Exotic word, they have no notion of it but from seeing a modern *Bishop*. To such therefore, this Version, *you Presbyters, whom the Holy Ghost hath made Bishops over all the Flock*, gives a Sense erroneous and false. Well then is it translated in your Bible *Overseers*: and if our awkward *Free-thinker* had chang'd the Tables, and expostulated, not why here *Overseers*, but why not every where else; perhaps he could not have been so easily answer'd.

XXXVI.

Another *Pious Fraud* is laid to your Translators, *Acts* vii, 59. * *And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus receive my Spirit*. For, says he, the word *God* has no Manuscript nor Printed Copy in any Language to vouch it. And was this *Insertion* made fraudulently? Or is it not an *Impious Fraud* in this Writer, to bring so false a charge against a book that deserves his veneration? Are not the words *Upon God* printed in *Italic Letter*, to warn the Reader as usually, that they are not in the Original? In the same Chapter there are these

* Pag. 93.

several words *inserted*, to make the Sense clearer; So much as, *Abraham, Begat, Time, The Father, Saying, Him, So:* and all distinguish'd in *Italic* with a nice and religious exactness. Why did not our Writer make exceptions to those? He can easily allow Them: but the name of *God* to be inserted is a *Free-thinker's* aversion. Well, but had the Translators conceal'd the insertion, and not proclaim'd it by an *Italic* Letter, where had been the *Pious Fraud*? What interest, what Priestcraft can it serve? Is this a Text bandied for the Rights of the Church? Can he deny, that the words *Upon God* supplied in the Version, are manifestly understood in the Original? The *Greek* word is *ἐπικαλέσθαι*, *calling upon*: and our Author is uncommonly honest, when he charges one word *God*, and not two, *Upon God*, to be the Insertion. So that *they stoned Stephen calling upon——and saying, Lord, &c.* Pray, what or whom did he *call upon*? certainly either *God* or *the Lord*; and let our Author take his choice. Nay, the words being thus in the Text according to the present Copies, *ΕΠΙΚΑΛΟΥΜΕΝΟΝ ΚΑΙ ΛΕΓΟΝΤΑ*; should I affirm, that a word is dropt out, either *ON* *God* absorpt by the preceding syllable *ON*, or *KN* *the Lord* by the following syllable *ΚΑΙ*, and that your Translators were of the same opinion, considering that *ἐπικαλέσθαι τὸ θεόν* and *τὸ κύριον* come so frequently in the Septuagint; I dare challenge all the Tribe to answer it, though they take the Cismarine Critic to their aid and assistance.

XXXVII.

Well, but the *Postscripts* of the II^d Epistle to *Timothy*, and of the Epistle to *Titus*, wherein the former is stil'd, * *First Bishop* of the Church of the *Ephesians*, and the latter of the *Cretans*, were both prov'd in Parliament to be bold and *spurious Additions made by your Reverend Editors*. This is formidable indeed to tell Us at *Leipfic*; where your English Parliament must needs have greater authority, than any General Council. But how, pray, was it prov'd there? Was it enacted by all the Estates, and with the Bishops concurrence? Or was it voted only in the Lower House? Or, which is yet lower, was it only debated? Or when was this great transaction? He quotes for it *Diurnal Occurrences*, a book unknown in these parts: so that I can only guess, either at the time or the manner of it. However I durst lay a small wager, that it was done in what you call your Rump Parliament; and this learned Proof was made there by some Lay Elder in buff. Be that as it will; I dare tell our Author, without any Vote of our *German Diet* in opposition to his Parliament, That it was never prov'd there nor any where else; and that he speaks not one true word in all this Paragraph. For he blunders, when he calls them *Postscripts*; that word ever implying, that they were subjoin'd by the Writer of the Letter preceding. But no body yet either believ'd or affirm'd, that These were underwritten by *St. Paul* himself. They are nothing but Memorandums or Endorsements, written by others, long after the death of the Apostle. But be they *Postscripts* or *Subscripts*; your Translators neither made them,

* Page 94.

nor recommended them for Scripture. And his Parliamentary Proof, that *those Additions were Made by the Reverend Editors*, does miserably fail him. Impudence and Noise against plain Matter of Fact! Let him look into *Dr. Mill's Edition*, and he'll see that very few of the Manuscripts want them: and they were printed in the best *Greek Editions*, before your *Editors* were born.

XXXVIII.

* *It is certain, says he, the Priests may plead the Authority of the Fathers for Forgery, Corruption, and Mangling of Authors with more reason, than for any of their Articles of Faith.* He grows in impudence and profaneness; but how does he make this out? from a † Passage of *St. Jerom*, the import of which he understands not, and the words he has wilfully perverted. One *Vigilantius* had accus'd *St. Jerom*, as a favourer of *Origen's Heresies*: because he had translated several of his Writings into *Latin*. The Father replies to this effect, ' That the nature of
' his Studies led him to read all sorts of Books, such
' as those of *Origen, Apollinarius, Eusebius*, who in
' some points indeed were Heretical, but in others
' had given great light to the Scriptures, and done
' eminent service to the Church: That some of their
' Books he had translated into *Latin*, for the use of
' those that understood not the *Greek*; but not so
' as to propagate their Heresies; for he had either
' omitted those Tracts, or rescinded or refuted
' those Passages, which might pervert or scandalize
' the unlearned Reader *. Here we see, *St. Jerom*

* Pag. 96. † *Ep. ad Vigilantium Tom. iv. Ed. Nova p. 275.*

* See also *Ep. De erroribus Origenis p. 345. Adversus Rufinum Apologia 1 & 11.*

does not excuse himself (as our Writer turns it) for *mangling of Authors*, but for translating them at all. But how in justice can the omission of some Tracts or Passages, where the Translator is free to take what he pleases, be call'd *mangling of Authors*? Did not *Ferom* acquaint the Public both in his Prefaces to the respective Books, and in these Epistles, that he had left out such Passages? Did he *mangle Origen* in the Original, and procure the *Greek Copies* to be raz'd or interpolated? How was *Origen* then *mangled*, whose works were preserv'd entire both then and long after? Neither had *Ferom's* Translation that consequence then, as in our days a numerous Edition propagated from the Press. His Version was but one written Copy, that might be transcrib'd by some of his friends, or a few others that were curious. And what is there in all this, unworthy of an honest man? Were I to translate *Petronius's Civil War*, or some of the chaste Epigrams of *Martial*: should I be counted a *Mangler*, because I added not all their Obscenities? Your *Free-thinkers* at that rate are the greatest *Manglers of Authors*, who have taken a contrary course, and cull'd all the lewd and smutty Passages of the antient Poets, and printed them together. 9.

But our Writer cannot pass this Passage of *St. Ferom*, without a cast of his skill and fidelity. The words cited by him are, *Si igitur quae bona sunt, transtuli; & mala vel amputavi vel correxi, vel tacui; arguendus sum, cur per me LATINI bona Origenis habeant, & mala ignorent?* which our faithful Writer thus translates: *Am I to be blam'd for making MEN acquainted with what is good in Origen, and keeping 'em ignorant of what is bad in him.* Where the Father says *Latini*, the *Latins*; our Author says *Men* in general; on purpose to insinuate that *Ferom* had

suppress'd or mutilated or corrupted *Origen's* Greek Copies. For while those were in being and entire, *Jerom* could not keep all *Men* ignorant of what was bad in *Origen*, but only the *Latins*.

Where the Father says, *Qui omnium Psalmorum commentarios haeretici hominis vertit in nostrum eloquium*: our Writer englishes it thus, *Who translated into Latin the Commentaries of EUSEBIUS of Caesarea, a grand Heretic*. The Father indeed means *Eusebius*; but names him not: but our Writer has put him into the Text, and in Capitals too, to make the Reader mind it; and then bestows out of his own store the epithet *Grand*; and puts it in the mouth of *St. Jerom*. Why this venom thrown upon *Eusebius*; but that the *Freethinkers* hate him, as one of the chief Writers of the Church? Could our Author be ignorant, that it was a great dispute then, and continues so still, whether *Eusebius* was really a *Heretic*, that is, an *Arian*, or no? Has not your learned *Dr. Cave*, in a late elaborate Dissertation, done justice to his Character? Why then a *Grand Heretic* in the Version, when it's bare *Heretic* in the Text? An honest Writer indeed, who in the very place where he cries out on *Forgery*, *Corruption*, and *Mangling*, cannot himself refrain from *forging*, *corrupting*, and *fraudulently adding*.

XXXIX.

I pass over his trifling Instances of mangling *Father Paul's* Letters, * *Baumgarten's* Travels, and *Anthony Wood's* History: which omissions he has here kindly supplied, out of dear love to *Treason*, *Superstition*, and *Scandal*. And yet You perhaps in *England* can even in these Trifles shew his fraud and prevarication.

* Pag. 94, 95, 96.

He then commences his *Third Section*, with pretended Objections and Answers about *Free-thinking*, taken in a good and legitimate sense. Is he always at his Juggling, and shifting the true Question? Do's he hope to flur his unwary Reader with such a palpable Imposture? *Free-thinking* here for many * Pages together is put for Common use of Reason and Judgment, a lawful Liberty of Examining, and in a word, good *Protestantism*. Then whip about, and it stands for Scepticism, for Infidelity, for bare *Atheism*. But his Mask is too thin and two pellucid to cover his true Face. He is still known for a mere Atheist; though he talks of *Free-thinking* in words that may become a Christian. What *Aristippus* once said, when he was pleas'd with some sweet Unguent, *Curse on those effeminate wretches, that have made so pretty a thing scandalous*; may be applied to Him, and his Tribe, for bringing a scandal on so good a Word as *Free-thinking*, that does not belong to them. They *Free*, by way of distinction? that have the most slavish of Systems, mere Matter, eternal Sequel of Causes; chain'd Fatalists, fetter'd *Spinosists*. They *Thinkers*, by way of eminence? who have proper title to no Thought, but that of the Fool, when he said in his heart, *there was no God*. For this is the First and the Last of all their glorious searches.

But I could have sav'd him one Objection, That † *Freethinking may produce a great number of Atheists*. Pray, be not in pain for that; unless he means (as he often do's) *Free-thinking* and *Atheism* for synonymous words. * *It is possible*, says his Objector, *that if Free-thinking be allow'd, some men may think themselves into Atheism*. Courage! and dismiss those dismal apprehensions. For however it might be of

* Pag. 99. — 110. † Pag. 105. * Pag. 104.

old times, or now among some *Hottentots* or *Iroquois*, where the materials of Thinking are scanty, and the methods uncultivated; there's no danger of this in *England*, in that Light of Science and Learning. A person there may easily rob, plunder, perjure, debauch, or drink himself into Atheism: but it's impossible he can *think* himself into't. Let him think thoroughly; come duly prepar'd, and proceed patiently and impartially; and I dare be answerable for him, without an Office of Insurance.

XL.

While I was looking on his Passage of *Zosimus* * (whom out of his profound skill in Greek, he twice writes *Zozimus*) I had like to have dropt a memorable Paragraph, which shews his great affection to your Clergy. He complains of the † *great charge of maintaining such numbers of Ecclesiastics, as a great evil to Society, and a Burden never felt on any other occasion*. Now how shall I accost him? as a grand Historian, or a shrew'd Politician? For I know he's above the low considerations of Divine Worship, Truth, Piety, Salvation, and Immortality. But what news does he tell us? That the supporting of Priests is a burden unknown before Christianity? Had he read over even those Authors alone, with whose twice-borrow'd Scraps he has fill'd his Margin; he would have learnt, That both in *Greece* and *Italy*, before our Saviour's Birth, the Heathen Priests were more in Number, higher in Dignity, and better provided with Endowments, Salaries, and Immunities, than now you are in *England*. The like was before in *Egypt*, and in every other Country, where Humanity and Letters had any footing. Many of

* Pag. 117, 118. † Pag. 114.

his Authors (whom he cites as *Free-thinkers*) were Priests themselves, *Josephus, Plutarch, Cato, * Cicero* &c. and the last named was made so after his Consulate, the highest Post of Honour and Power then in the Universe : nay (to make our Author quite lay him aside forever) he had the *Indeleble Character* too; for being once made a Priest, a Priest he was to be for Life. But what an Adversary am I writing against, wholly ignorant of common History? And his Politics are as low too, that would extirpate the whole Order of your Clergy; and so bring your Country to the ignorance of the *Savages*, to a worse condition than your old Ancestors were in, while they had their *Bards* and their *Druids*. For it ever was and ever will be true, in all Nations, under all Manners and Customs, *No Priesthood, no Letters, no Humanity*; and reciprocally again, *Society, Laws, Government, Learning, a Priesthood*. What then would our thoughtless *Thinker* be at? Sink the Order of the present Clergy to save charges to the Public? And pay the same or double, to maintain as many † for *Epicurus*, or *Juppiter*, or *Baal*: for some Order of Priests there will be. Though even take him in his *Free-thinking* Capacity; he can never conceive nor wish a Priesthood, either quieter for Him, or cheaper, than the present Church of *England*. Of your Quietness, himself is a convincing Proof, who has writ this outrageous Book, and has met with no Punishment nor Prosecution. And for the Cheapness, That appear'd lately in one of your Parliaments; when the Accounts exhibited show'd, That 6000 of your Clergy, the greater part of your whole number, had at a middle rate one with another not 50 pounds a year. A poor emolument for so long, so laborious,

* Γένειαι τῶ ἱερῶν, ἔς Ἀύγουστος Παμνήσι, καλλῆσαι. Plut. in Cic.

† See Remark the *Vth*.

so expensive an Education, as must qualify them for Holy Orders. While I resided at *Oxford*, and saw such a conflux of Youth to their annual Admissions; I have often studied and admir'd, why their Parents would under such mean encouragements design their Sons for the Church; and those the most towardly and capable and select Genius's among their Children; who must needs have emerg'd in a Secular Life. I congratulated indeed the felicity of your Establishment, which attracted the Choice Youth of your Nation for such very low Pay: but my wonder was at the Parents, who generally have Interest, Maintenance, and Wealth, the first thing in their view: till at last one of your State Lotteries ceas'd my astonishment. For as in That, a few glittering Prizes, 1000, 5000, 10000 Pounds among an infinity of Blanks, drew troops of Adventurers; who, if the whole Fund had been equally ticketed, would never have come in: so a few shining Dignities in your Church, Prebends, Deaneries, Bishopricks, are the *pious fraud* that induces and decoys the Parents, to risk their Childs Fortune in it. Every one hopes his Own will get some great Prize in the Church, and never reflects on the Thousands of Blanks in poor Country Livings. And if a Foreigner may tell you his mind, from what he sees at home, 'Tis This part of your Establishment, that makes your Clergy excel Ours. Do but once level all your Preferments, and you'll soon be as level in your Learning. For instead of the Flower of the *English* youth, you'll have only the Refuse sent to your Academies; and those too cramp'd and crippled in their Studies for want of Aim and Emulation. So that if your *Free-thinkers* had any Politics, instead of suppressing your whole Order, they should make you all alike: or, if That cannot be done, make your Preferments

a very

a very Lottery in the whole Similitude. Let your Church Dignities be pure Chance Prizes, without regard to Abilities or Morals or Letters; as a Journeyman (I think) in that State Lottery was the favorite Child of Fortune.

XLI.

But again, before I come to the inviting Passage of *Zofimus*, I shall gather some of his scatter'd Flowers, and comprise them under one Remark. * *If any good Christian, says he, happens to reason better than ordinary, the Priests presently charge him with Atheism.* He means only your *English* Priests, as I see by his Instances: and naughty men They, if any of them do so. But I'll give him a word of Comfort, and offer my self as Sponsor for them, that none of them will call Him Atheist, *for reasoning better than ordinary.* Good man, to avoid that odious name, he has sprinkled all his pages with mere Nonsense out of pure Consideration and Forecast.

To shew his good Taste and the virtuous Turn of his mind, he praises two Abuses upon *James* the I, † *That he was a Doctor, more than a King; and was priest-ridden by his Archbishop;* as the most VALUABLE passages in *Father Paul's* Letters: and yet, as I have been told, those Passages are spurious and forg'd. Well, but were they genuine and true, are those the things he most *values*? O the vast Love and Honour he bears to the Crown and the Mitre! But his Palate is truly constant and uniform to it self: he drudges in all his other Authors, Ancient and Modern, not to find their Beauties, but their Spots; not to gather the Roses, but the Thorns; not to suck good Nutriment, but Poison. — A thou-

* Pag. 85. † Pag. 94, 95.

land bright pages in *Plutarch* and *Tully* pass heavy with him without relish: but if he chances to meet with a suspicious or sore Place; then he's feasted and regaled, like a Fly upon a Ulcer, or a Beetle in Dung: and with those delicious scraps put together, he has dress'd out this Book of *Free-thinking*.

But have a care of provoking him too much; for he has still in reserve more * *Instances of your Conduct: Your Declamations against Reason*; such false Reason, I suppose, as He and his Tribe would put off for good Sterling; *Your Arts and Methods of discouraging Examination into the Truths of Religion*; such *Truths* forsooth of Religion as This, That Religion it self is all false: and again, *Your encouraging examination, when either Authority is against you* (the Authority he means of your late King *James*, when one of his Free-thinking Doctors thought himself into Popery) or *When you think that Truth is certainly on your Side*: he will not say, that *Truth* is certainly on your side, but only that *you think so*: however he allows here you are *sometimes* sincere; a favour he would not grant you in some of his former Instances.

But the last and most cutting Instance is, † *Your instilling Principles into Youth*; no doubt he means those pernicious *Principles* of Fearing God, Honouring the King, Loving your Neighbour as your Selves, Living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World. O the glorious Nation you would be! if your stiff Parsons were once displac'd, and *Free-thinkers* appointed Tutors to your young Nobility and Gentry. How would Arts, Learning, Manners, and all Humanity flourish in an Academy under such Preceptors? Who instead of your Bible should read *Hobbes's Leviathan*; should *instill* early the sound doctrines of the Mortality of the Soul,

* *Pag. 97.* † *Pag. 27.*

and the sole Good of a voluptuous Life. No doubt such an Establishment would make you a happy people, and even a rich: for our Youth would all desert us in *Germany*, and presently pass the Sea for such noble Education.

The beginning of his III^d Section, where (as I remark'd before) *Free-thinking* stands for no more than *Thinking*, may pass in general for Truth, though wholly an Impertinence. For who in *England* forbids Thinking? Or who ever made such Objections, as he first raises and then refutes? He dare not sure insinuate, as if none of your Clergy *thought*; nor examin'd any Points of Doctrine: but took a Systeme of Opinions by force and constraint, under the terrour of an Inquisition, or the dread of Fire and Fagot. So that we have xx pages of mere amusement, under the ambiguity of a word. Let your Clergy once profess, that They are the True *Free-thinkers*, and you'll soon see the unbelieving Tribe renounce their new Name.

However in these senseless Pages he has scatter'd a mark of his great Learning. He says, * *The infinite variety of Opinions, Religions, and Worship among the antient Heathens never produc'd any disorder or confusion.* What? was it no disorder, when *Socrates* suffer'd Death for his Opinions; when *Aristotle* was impeach'd and fled; when *Stilpo* was banish'd; and when *Diagoras* was proscrib'd? Were not the *Epicureans* driven out from several Cities, for the debaucheries and tumults they caus'd there? Did not † *Antiochus* banish all *Philosophers* out of his whole Kingdom; and for any one to learn of them, made it Death to the Youth himself, and loss of Goods to his Parents? Did not *Domitian* expell all the *Philosophers* out of *Rome* and whole *Italy*? Did the

* Pag. 101. † Athenaeus, lib. xii, p. 547.

Galli, the vagabond Priests of *Cybele*, make no disturbances in Town and Country? Did not the *Romans* frequently forbid *Strange Religions* and external Rites that had crept into the City, and banish the Authors of them? Did the *Bacchanals* create no disorders in *Rome*, when they endanger'd the whole State; and thousands were put to death for having been initiated in them? In a word, was that no disturbance in *Egypt*, which *Juvenal* tells of his own knowledge, (and which frequently used to happen) when in two neighboring Cities their Religious Feuds ran so high; that at the annual Festival of one, the other out of zeal went to disturb the Solemnity; and after thousands were fighting on both sides, and many Eyes and Noses lost, the Scene ended in Slaughter, and the body slain cut into bits, and eaten up raw by the Enemies? And all this Barbarity committed, because the one side worship'd *Crocodiles*, and the other kill'd and eat them.

summus utrinque

*Inde furor vulgo, quod numina vicinorum
Odit uterque locus; cum solos credat habendos
Esse deos, quos ipse colit.*

Let him go now, and talk facetiously at his Club,
That among the Pagans there was no *Polemic Divinity*.

XLII.

We are now come to a grand Secret of your Priestcraft, * *The Toleration of Vice, by which all the Rogues and Fools are engag'd in your Party.* This, he says, was put in practice with success, as early as *Constantine the Great*, who (as *Zozimus* tell us) after he had committed such horrible Villanies, which the Pagan Priests told him were not expiable in their

* Pag. 117, 118.

Religion; being assur'd by an Egyptian Bishop, that there was no Villany so great, but was to be expiated by the Sacraments of the Christian Religion, He quitted the Religion of his Ancestors, and embrac'd the NEW IMPIETY: so Zozimus impiously calls the Christian Religion. Now the Business it self, laid to Constantine's Charge here by a bigotted Pagan, is too stale and trivial, to deserve a new Answer; having been fully refuted both by the Ecclesiastic Historians of old, and several of the Moderns. But what I here animadvert on, is the prodigious Aukwardness of our Writer, both in his Version and Application of this Passage.

Zozimus, a poor superstitious Creature (and consequently, as one would guess, an improper witness for our *Free-thinker*) who has fill'd his little History not more with malice against the Christians, than with bigotry for the Pagans; who treats his Reader with Oracles of the *Palmyrenes* and *Sibylls*; with annual Miracles done by *Venus*, where Gold and Silver swum upon Water; with Presages and Dreams of old Women; with Thunders and Earthquakes as if they were Prodigies; with a dead Body vanishing in the middle of an Army; with Omens, and with Predictions from Entrails of Beasts; with an Apparition of *Pallas* and her *Gorgon*, and with the Spectre of *Achilles*; with wooden Idols that Fire could not burn; with a Necklace of the Goddess *Rhea*, that executed Divine Vengeance; who imputes the taking of *Rome* by *Alarich* to the omission of Pagan Sacrifices; and the decay of the Roman Empire to *Constantine's* neglecting the *Ludi Saeculares*: this wise and judicious Author is brought in for a good Evidence; and our avow'd Enemy to Superstition connives at all this Trumpery, for the sake of one stab at the reputation of *Constantine*, and the honour of Christianity.

Buc

But how has he manag'd and represented it? The Story, as * *Zosimus* himself tells it, is thus. ' *Constantine* being troubled in Conscience for some Crimes he had committed, applied to the Heathen Priests for expiation. They answering, that they had no way of Expiation for Crimes of so deep a Die; a certain *Egyptian* told him, That if he would turn Christian, all his Sins would be immediately forgiven him. *Constantine* liking this well, and after a renuntiation of Paganism partaking of the Christian Rites, ὁ ἀσεβείας τῷ ἀρχιῷ ἐποίησατο, τῷ Μαντικῷ ἔχειν ἐν ὑποψίᾳ, for his FIRST INSTANCE OF IRRELIGION, he began to suspect and cry down the Art of foretelling things from the Entrails of Beasts; for having had many Events truly predicted to him by that Art, he was afraid others would make use of it against himself. This is a faithful Version; for that Μαντικὴ here means *Haruspicina*, the art of Divination by Entrails, appears from p. 157. and other places of that Author.

How amazing now is the Ignorance of our *Free-thinker*? unless perhaps he will plead Impudence: for with such men, *excusatiùs est voluntate peccare quam casu*, its counted a smaller fault to prevaricate on purpose, than err by mistake. He stops his Citation and Version in the very middle of the Sentence, and interprets ὁ ἀσεβείας τῷ ἀρχιῷ, THE NEW IMPIETY; and then subjoins with a sneer, So *Zosimus* impiously calls the Christian Religion. If *Zosimus* speaks not impiously, some body else does. For with Him ἀσεβεία, Irreligion, Neglect of Worship, has only reference to the Pagan Rites, and particularly to Sacrifices and *Haruspices*. These Con-

Constantine had abandon'd, and for that reason deserv'd as well as * *Cato the Censor*, to be put into our Writer's *List of Free-thinkers*. But see the Partiality! *Constantine* has lost his Favour, because he first made the Government Christian: and an Author must be mangled, Sense and Grammar distorted, all rules of Syntax perverted, to bring out a little Blasphemy. Ἀρχὴν τῆς ἀσεβείας ἐποίησατο, *Embrac'd the New Impiety*? and the *Christian Religion* meant by it? Intolerable Construction, and monstrous! there's scarce a *such like Prodigy* in his former Version of *Cicero*.

XLIII.

The next Witness, that he summons from the Shades, is *Julian the Apostate*: and I wonder he did not call along with him *Judas Iscariot*. But what does *Julian* depose? Why, † *the foresaid Conversion of Constantine, gave occasion to him to satirize thus our Holy Religion*: * *Whosoever is a Ravisher, a Murderer, guilty of Sacrilege or any other abomination, let him come boldly: for, when I have wash'd him with this Water, I'll immediatly make him clean and innocent: and if he commits the same crimes again, I'll make him after he has thump'd his Breast and beat his Head, as clean as before*. And what can our Writer make of this Satire, though I've mended his Version for him? A ridiculous and stale Banter, us'd by *Celsus* and others before *Julian*, upon the Christian Doctrines, Baptism, Repentance, and Remission of Sins. Baptism is rallied as *mere washing*, and Repentance as *thumping the head* and other outward Grimace. The inward Grace, the intrinsic Change of Mind are left out of the Character. And whom are we to believe, these Pagans or our Own selves? Are we to fetch our notions of the Sacraments

* Pag. 135. † Pag. 118. * *Juliani Caesares*, in fine.

from

from Scraps of *Julian* and *Celsus*? or from the Scripture, the pure Fountain; from what we read, know, and profess? And yet the Banter came more decently out of *Celsus* an *Epicurean*'s mouth, than out of *Julian*'s, the most bigoted Creature in the World. He to laugh at Expiation by Baptism, whose whole life after his Apostacy was a continued course of *καθαρσμοί*, Washings, Purgations, Expiations, with the most absurd ceremonies? addicted to the whole train of Superstitions; Omens, Presages, Prodigies, Spectres, Dreams, Visions, Auguries, Oracles, Magic, Theurgic, Psychomantic? Whose whole Court in a manner consisted of *Haruspices* and *Sacrificuli*, and Philosophers as silly as they? Who was always poring in the Entrails of Cattel to find Futurities there? Who if he had return'd Victor out of *Persia* (as his very Pagan friends jested on him) would have extinguish'd the whole species of Bulls and Cows, by the number of his Sacrifices? I have drawn this Character of him, from his own Writings, and the Heathens his contemporaries: that I might not bring suspected testimonies from Christian Authors. Though even These allow him to have been *egregiae indolis, an extraordinary Genius*; if he had not been spoilt by the Philosophers his Masters. The truth is; those persons, for their Professorial interest, and to keep the Pagan System in some countenance against the objections of Christians, had quite alter'd the old Schemes of Philosophy; and pretended to more Impulses, Inspirations, Revelations, and Commerce with the Deity, than Christians could truly do. Not one of those sanctified Philosophers, but had Dreams, Visions, and Extatic Colloquies with Daemons every night: and with this trumpery they drew *Julian* off from Christianity, and made him think himself as great an Adept,

as any of his Teachers. He * saw the *Sun* in a Vision, speaking to him in Verse, and foretelling the death of *Constantius*; besides other innumerable communications with his favorite God *Mihbras*. This was the fly way they took; *clavum clavo*, to surfeit him with Revelations, enough for a St. *Bright*: nor could they ever have made him Apostatize, but by infatuating him with Superstitions. However, though Christianity suffer'd, by losing one of his great Abilities and moral Virtues; our modern Atheists can never reckon him on Their side, among the list of *Free-thinkers*.

XLIV.

Our Writer raises an Objection; which, unless he had better answer'd, he had better have let alone; † *That Free-thinkers themselves are the most infamous, wicked, and senseless of all Mankind*. He pretends not yet to refute this from Fact and Experience, by telling Who he is, or Who are members of his *Growing Sect*, that we might bring their Characters to the Touchstone; but he argues forsooth *a priori*.

The reproach of *Senseless* he confutes with ease, by a *self-evident* Proposition; * *For men that use their Understandings must have more Sense, than they that use them not*. Very compendious truly! but out of too much precipitation he leaves his Syllogism in the lurch. He forgets to prove, That every man that *uses his Understanding* is (in the meaning of his Book) a *Free-thinker*. Without this, that same *Senseless* will still stick close upon him, and the closer for this very Syllogism. 'Tis mere Chicanery in the word: a *Free-thinker*, in this *self-evident* Pro-

* *Zosim. Pag. 155.* † *Pag. 118.* * *Pag. 120.*

position, is * *any man that uses his Understanding*, that is, that *thinks* at all: a very comprehensive Definition. And yet presently in the next Paragraph, a *Free-thinker* is but *One of a Thousand*, one that *departs from the sentiments of the Herd of Mankind*; that is, (for he could scarce have told it us in a plainer description) a mere *Atheist*, or at least *No Christian*. Are not these two Acceptations of the same word wonderfully consistent? Either let him profess plainly, that no Christian, no Man but an Atheist, this One of a thousand, *uses his Understanding*; or let him own that Himself has us'd none here; and that He and his Syllogism too have much of the *Senseless*.

Infamy and *Wickedness*, the second reproach, he thus repells from his Party: A *Free-thinker*, † who incurs *the whole malice of the Priests*, and is *sure to have 999 of a thousand for his enemies*, is oblig'd for his own sake IN THIS WORLD to be *virtuous and honest*. So that here, as far as this Argument goes, if the *Free-thinkers* are not wicked, it's only out of Fear and Restraint. A good hint, how *virtuous* they would be; if the *Growing Sect* should grow so numerous, as to promise themselves impunity, and face it out against infamy and scandal. If their *Honesty* by their own confession is owing to their Paucity; 'tis high time indeed to inquire into their numbers.

But (2dly) to commence a *Free-thinker*, * *requires great Diligence and Application of mind*; and he expells all vicious dispositions and passions by being never out of *Action*; and so we have another egregious Demonstration. But is this too to pass upon us for *Self-evident*? Are all *Busy* men *Virtuous*? And are all *Free-thinkers* *Busy*? I'll be responsible for neither of the Propositions. But the poor Writer seems to hint here tacitly for Himself, What *great diligence*, what appli-

* Pag. 120. † Pag. 120. * Pag. 121.

cation of mind he has us'd, to work himself into Atheism: how much more, to compose such an elaborate Book? how many merry Meetings, and kind Assignations has he balk'd, while he was gleaning his Bundle of Scraps? how many watchful nights, and abstemious days has he pass'd, in painful and dry drudgery; while you lazy **Ecclesiastics*, he says, *were employ'd in the most innocent manner you can be, in mere eating and drinking?* And yet methinks you have done something else besides making good cheer: or else Germany would not be so full of your Praises, and our Libraries full of your Books; where such puny Performances as His, for all his *diligence* and *application*, will never deserve admission.

Well, but † (3dly) *by much Thinking* (here again we are trick'd for *Free-thinking*) *men comprehend the whole compass of Human Life; are convinc'd, that IN THIS LIFE Misery attends the practice of Vice, and Happiness that of Virtue; and that to live pleasantly, they must live virtuously.* A wonderful discovery indeed! and can no body comprehend this, but *Free-thinkers* and *Atheists*? Why, this is the most beaten Topic in all the Books and Sermons of your *Clergy*, That even in This life a Virtuous man, a good Christian, is the most happy of men; that God has forbid nothing beneficial and useful to us; that besides the Future promises and threats, Virtue carries here it's own reward, and Vice it's own punishment. So that if This notion is sufficient to make a Free-thinker *Virtuous*; much more will it operate upon *Christians*, when supported and enforc'd with a firm belief of another Life.

The Result then of his Arguments for a Free-thinker's *Virtue*, is this, That *he fears Evil in this World, That he's a man of Business and Application.*

* Pag. 114. † Pag. 121.

and loves *Pleasure in this Life*. This is all the Security he offers for his Honesty and Good Behaviour. By which he declares himself and his Clan to be mere *Atheists*, as much as if he had spoke it out. For, as you see, Immortality is quite out of their Scheme; and the Saying us'd here, *To live pleasantly, they must live virtuously*, is the very Axiom of *Epicurus*, * Οὐκ ἔστιν ἡδέως ζῆν, ἀνευ τῆς Φρονίμως καὶ καλῶς καὶ δικαίως, 'Tis not possible to live pleasantly, without living wisely, honestly, and justly, and so vice versa. This is said indeed; but said by Him with so ill a grace, as to set folks a laughing. And our Author might have seen, how all the other Sects ridiculed this Magniloquence of *Epicurus*, as inconsistent with his whole Systeme; and prov'd by set and legitimate Treatises, that a true *Epicurean* could not live a Pleasant life, much less a *Virtuous*. And I dare say, were this Writer's soul known, and if he speaks true of his *Application of mind*; he finds no great *Pleasure* in his gloomy doctrine of utter Extinction.

But to leave that to his own Conscience; He is very odd and diverting, when to prove this *Epicurean* notion, he draws in two Passages of *Cicero*. † FOR *who*, says He, *lives pleasantly, except him who delights in his duty &c.* This is quoted out of the Fifth Paradox, where he argues in the *Stoical* Manner, *That the Wise man alone is Free, and every Fool a Slave: Quis enim vivit, ut vult, For who lives freely, as he list (this our Writer translates pleasantly) but he who delights in his duty &c.* that is in short, *but the Wiseman of the Stoics?* Now what a fetch and strein is here to draw this Character to the *Epicurean*? How decently it sits upon him? He might as justly apply to him all the Beatitudes in our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount.

* Κρίσις δόξαι num. v. & Epistola ad Menoecean. † Pag. 121.

But he has a second Passage, *Offices I, 2.* * *Whoever places Happiness in any thing besides Virtue &c.* Another sagacious Application! Is this the man, that for four pages together insults the Clergy for misapplying Passages of † *Tully*? This in the *Offices* stands really thus: That great Author having determin'd to write a Book to his Son (whom he had then plac'd under a *Peripatetic* Master) *About the Duties of Civil Life*, declares in the Proëme what Philosophers he would follow. *Because there are some Sects*, says he, *that by (wrong) stating the Ends of Good and Evil pervert all Civil Duty, Friendship, Justice, Liberality, Fortitude, Temperance.* For he that separates the Chief Good from Virtue and Honesty, and measures it by his own Profit (if he's constant to his Principle, and is not sometimes overcome by Good Nature) can neither be Friendly, Just, nor Liberal: neither can he be Courageous, who declares Pain the greatest Evil; nor Temperate, who maintains Pleasure to be the greatest Good. These Sects, subjoins he, if they are consistent with themselves, can have nothing to say, de Officio, about Civil Duty. That Subject solely belongs to Stoics, Academics, and Peripatetics. Where it's manifest, the Sects he reflects on, are the *Epicureans* and *Cyrenaiics*: and we have his plain declaration, That upon those Principles no man can live honestly and virtuously. And yet this inauspicious Gleaner, this new Revisor forsooth of *Cicero*, will needs wrest this very Passage to a commendation of *Epicurus's* and his own Rules of Morality. And pray observe, how gingerly he translates *Temperans, moderate in the enjoyment of Pleasure.* Whereas *Temperance*, according to *Tully*, in *praetormittendis & aspernandis voluptatibus cernitur, consists in the neglecting and despising of Pleasure.* If our Writer should be found a Popish Priest at last, I dare say he's a very easy and moderate Confessor.

* Pag. 122. † Pag. 137, &c.

XLV.

But he now leaves Arguments *a priori*, and proceeds to Historical Accounts, wherein he will shew, * *That they who have been distinguish'd in all Ages for their Understanding and Virtue, have been Free-thinkers.* Such Free-thinkers as his Party are, or else all his labour is lost: and yet we shall find, that among his whole List there's scarce a Pair, that will come under that Character.

SOCRATES, his first Instance, *the divinest man of the Heathen World, was, as he says, a very great Free-thinker.* By what mark or token? Why, † *he disbeliev'd the Gods of his Country, and the common Creeds about them.* Allow that; though just before his death he made a Hymn to *Apollo*, and left a Sacrifice to *Aesculapius*: yet why is this Character so peculiar to *Socrates*? I'll help our Author to a Million of *Free-thinkers*, upon the very same reason. For *Constantine* himself, whom he abus'd before, and all the Pagan Converts to Christianity before Him and after, *disbeliev'd the (same) Gods of their Country, and the common Creeds about them.* Nay they far excell'd *Socrates* in their Free-thinking Quality: for He timorously * *fell in with the reigning Superstition of his Country, and suffer'd it quietly to take its course*; but They heroically profess'd their true Sentiments; in spite of terrors and tortures, contemn'd, routed, and trampled down *the Gods of their Country*; till Pagan Superstition was quite extinct, and wash'd away with the blood of so many Martyrs. And why, pray, could not these deserve from our Writer the honorable name of *Free-thinkers*? The reason is manifest: The Christians were *Free-thinkers* at first,

* Pag. 123. † Ibid. * Ibid.

while they contradicted the *Herd of mankind*; but now Christianity is establish'd, they themselves are become the *Herd*: and consequently Free-thinking now consists in contradicting Them. Dare he deny this is his Notion? And that his Characteristic of Free-thinking is to oppose a great Majority? No matter, whether right or wrong, whether the *Herd* is in Truth or in Errour, Free-thinking must be Singularity. * *Unthinking, shallow Fellow!* For at this rate, if the *Growing Sect* should so spread, as to attain the name of the *Herd*; the only title then to Free-thinking would be to oppose the *Free-thinkers*.

Well, but Socrates † declar'd his dislike, when he heard men attribute Repentance, Anger, and other Passions to the Gods; and talk of Wars and Battels in Heaven, and of the Gods getting Women with child, and such like fabulous and blasphemous Stories. This is quoted by him out of Plato in *Euthyphrone*, as if they were that Author's own Words. And what a fine Scene am I entring upon? He to complain of mangling, forging, and corrupting Passages? And Himself here to forge so openly, on purpose to hook in some bold and saucy Blasphemy? *Repentance and Anger attributed to the Gods*: this glances aside at those frequent expressions of our Bible, *The wrath of the Lord*, and, *The Lord repented*. As if the whole *Herd of Christians* did not know; that these are not to be taken literally, but are spoken ἀνθρωποπαγῶς, in a human manner, accommodated to our capacities and affections: the nature of God being infinitely above all ruffles of Passion. And then *Wars and Battles in Heaven*: this is pointed against *Revelations* XII, 7; *And there was war in heaven; Michael and his Angels fought against the Dragon, and the Dragon fought and His angels*. Now where has this Writer liv'd, or

* Pag. 104. † Pag. 123.

what *Idiot Evangelist* was he bred under; not to know that This is all Vision and Allegory, and not propos'd as literal truth. But his Mother perhaps, that gave him his first notions about *Bel and the Dragon*, might frighten too the naughty Boy with *Michael and the Dragon*. His last expression, of the *Gods getting Women with child*, without doubt was design'd by him as a Flout upon our Saviour's Incarnation.

But when we come to consult *Plato* himself, in the Passage alleg'd here; how do all this Writer's Insinuations vanish, and how does his own Impudence and Prevarication appear? The whole Passage is no more than this. *Socrates* discoursing with *Enthyphron* an *Haruspex*, who was bringing an Indictment for Murder against his own Father, ask'd him if he thought it just and pious to do so: 'Yes, says the other, it is right and pious to bring an offender to justice, though he be my Father; for so *Jove* bound his Father *Saturn* in Chains, for devouring his Children; and *Saturn* before had castrated His Father for some other Crime. I confess, replies *Socrates*, when I hear such things said of the Gods, * *I assent with some difficulty*: but do You think these things true? and that there are really Wars, and Enmities and Battles among the Gods, and many other such matters, as Poets and Painters represent? These are all true, says the other, and stranger things than these, which I could tell you. This is all that is there said on this head: and then *Socrates* proceeds in his disputation, upon the very Concession that these accounts of the Gods are true.

* Δυσχερῶς πως ἀποδέχομαι.

And hence first we may observe, that *Socrates* was not so free a Thinker, as our Writer represents him. For according to *Varro's* division of Religions into *Poëtical, Civil, and Philosophical*; 'tis the First here that *Socrates* with some difficulty assents to, or very tenderly denies: whereas the *Stoics* that came after him, treated openly that whole Poëtic System as *impious and superstitious*; * and these very Stories of *Saturn* and *Juppiter*, and of the Wars with *Titans* and *Giants*, and of Gods against Gods, as *wicked Fables, anile Superstitions, foolish and pernicious Errors*. But as to the *Civil Religion*, *Socrates* never oppos'd it, but always countenanc'd it both by discourse and example. His precept to his Scholars about matters of Worship, was to govern themselves νόμῳ πόλεως, by the Custom of the Country. He himself sacrific'd regularly and openly both at home and at the public Altars; he sent his Friends to consult the Oracle at *Delphi* upon all affairs of importance. How therefore will our Writer make out, † that he disbeliev'd the Gods of his Country? That indeed was the Indictment against him; Ἀδικεῖ Σωκράτης, ὅς ἡ πόλις νομίζει θεῶς, ὃ νομίζων: but he did not plead Guilty to it. And, though our Writer should now convict him; yet I am sure, his celebrated *Daemonium*, by whose admonition and impulse he guided all his affairs, sufficiently secures him from being listed and consociated with our modern *Free-thinkers*.

Another thing, we may observe from this Passage of *Plato*, is the unfairness and malignity of our Writer; who without the least hint from his Author has foisted in two Scoffs and Contumelies upon the Scripture. There's nothing said there of

* Cicero de Nat. Deor. I 1, 24, 28. † Xenophon Memorab. lib. 1.

God's repentance and anger; not a word of *Gods getting Women with Child*: why then does he suborn *Plato*, to speak what he never said? Why so great a Name to cover his own Impiety? *Mala mens, malus animus*: and from this Instance take the measure of our Writer's veracity.

But he will still press *Socrates* into the Service, and force him into his Regiment of Free-thinkers; * *because he did not make Notions, or Speculations, or Mysteries, any parts of his Religion*. No Mysteries? a wager with our Writer, that he was initiated in the Mysteries of *Ceres Eleusina*; and consequently had he liv'd in the present Age, would never have flouted *Christianity* for being *Mysterious*. But where's our Author's proof for this character of *Socrates*? Why, *he demonstrated all men to be fools, who troubled themselves with inquiries into Heavenly things; and ask'd such Inquirers, whether they had attain'd a perfect knowledge of Human things, since they search'd into Heavenly?* This the shrew'd Author gives, as a Translation from † *Xenophon*; and he proposes here *Heavenly things*, in the Christian Sense us'd by our Saviour and his Apostles. What shall I say, or what shall I not say? But I have spent already all my wonder and words too for this Writer's Stupidity. Can any thing be plainer, than that the τὰ ὑψάνια, the *Heavenly things* in that passage of *Xenophon* mean *Celestial Bodies and Appearances, their Causes, Magnitudes, and Motions?* These Physiological Inquiries, which had employ'd the former Philosophers, *Socrates* let alone; and first turn'd his Speculations to Morality and human Life. This is it, that *Xenophon* says there express; and it's eccho'd over and over in all antient * Authors. Let us

* Pag. 125. * Memor. lib. 1. * See Cicer. Acad. I, 4. Tusc. III, 4. & V, 4. Diogenes Laert. in Soc. and many more—
take

take now our Writer's Argument, and see how it concludes: *Because Socrates did not cultivate Astronomy, but Ethics; therefore he had no Mysteries in his Religion.* Because our Writer has cultivated no Science at all; *therefore* he makes such silly Syllogisms, and Blunders abominable.

XLVI.

To bring PLATO in among his *Free-thinkers*, our Writer is put hard to his shifts, and forc'd to make several doubles. He was not so free, * he owns, as *Socrates*; but alarm'd at His fate, kept himself more upon his guard, *and never talk'd publicly against the Religion of his Country.* This is arguing backwards, and gives him one remove Out of the List. But he brings him back with a fetch, *For he thought himself into notions, so contrary to those known in Greece, and so resembling Christianity; that as some Christians suspected He had read the Old Testament, so Celsus charges our Saviour with reading and borrowing from Him.* Allow this, and admire the consistency of our Writer's language and sentiments. The *Free-thinking* of *Plato*, by his present account of it, consisted solely in approaching to Christianity: but our modern *Free-thinking* lies wholly in receding from it, in a course retrograde to that of *Plato*. This *Free-thinking* is a mere *Empusa*; it changes shapes as fast as *Vertumnus*:

Quo teneam vultus mutantem Protea nodo?

But he goes on, and remarks, † *That Origen indeed very well defends our Blessed Lord from Celsus's Charge.* When you see the words *Very well*, and the complement of *Blessed Lord*; you are to expect from our Writer some smart piece of Burlesque.

* Pag. 126. † Pag. 127.

And here you have it; For Origen, says he, well replies, *That Celsus deserves to be laugh'd at, when he affirms JESUS had read Plato: who was bred and born among the Jews; and was so far from having been taught Greek Letters, that he was not taught Hebrew Letters, as the Scriptures testify.* You see, Origen's answer here is commended as *very good*; to insinuate with a sneer, that our Saviour was *Illiterate*. Contemptible Buffoon! Origen did not mean, he had *no Letters*, but that he did not acquire them in the vulgar way, by institution and industry. He was Θεοδιδάκτος, αὐτοδιδάκτος, *taught of God, taught of Himself.* Which made the Jews exclaim, who knew his Parentage and Education, * Πόθεν τὸν ἡ σοφία αὐτῆ; *Whence hath this man this wisdom?* Need He to learn Languages under a Preceptor; who could give to his Disciples the Gift of all Languages? Need He be taught Wisdom by Plato, or Gamaliel; who was *Essential Wisdom it self*, ἡ σοφία καὶ ὁ λόγος Θεῶ;

But he has another Gird upon Christianity; † For Amelius a Heathen Platonist, upon the reading the first verses of St. JOHN the Evangelist, cried out, *By Jove, this Barbarian is of our master Plato's opinion: where he imposes again on the English Reader with his Barbarian, as he did before with his Idiot Evangelist.* For ὁ βάρβαρος in the Original has no notion in it of Contempt of the Person; but relates solely to the Country of Palestine, as out of the bounds of Greece. But, pray, where did our learned Writer find this odd and scurrile Turn of Amelius's words? The passage it self, Amelius's own Writing, is extant in * Eusebius, Theodorit, and Cyrill; which I

* Matt. xiii, 54. † Pag. 127. * Euseb. Praep. p. 540. Theod. Graec. Affect. p. 33. Cyrill. c. Julian. p. 283.

shall translate without either *forging* or *mangling*: And this (says *Amelius*) was ὁ λόγος the Word: by whom being himself eternal all things, that are, existed; as *Heraclitus* would maintain: and indeed whom the *Barbarian* affirms, having the place and dignity of the Beginning (or Principle), to be with God, and to be God; by whom all things intirely were made; in whom whatever was made hath it's Life and Being; who descending into Body, and putting on Flesh, took the form of Man; though even then he gave proof of the Majesty of his Nature: nay, and after his dissolution, was deified again; and is God, the same he was before he descended into Body and Flesh and Man. Is there any Air in all this of Banter or Contempt? Is it not the very contrary, of the most serious Assent and Approbation? Has he not paraphras'd the Evangelist's words in the best stile and manner? Ὑπεράγα) ἡ τεθαύμαχε, says *Theodorit*; *Amelius* venerates and admires the Proëme of St. John's Gospel: and perhaps it was He (though no worse, if it was Another Platonist) who said * It deserv'd to be writ in Letters of Gold, and set in the most conspicuous place in every Church. And who now is the *Barbarian*, but our Writer himself? The Platonist he brought to affront the Evangelist, is found an Adorer of him. I hope he'll learn in his next Performance, not to depend too much on second or fifth hand Citations.

Our Author seems sensible, that he drags *Plato* per force into the Club of *Free-thinkers*; as *Cacus* did his Oxen into his Cave by the Tails. For which hanging back and reluctancy *Plato* shall have a dash;

* Augustin. de Civ. Dei x, 29. Quod initium S. Evangelii, cui nomen est secundum Joannem, quidam Platonici aureis literis conscribendum & per omnes Ecclesias in locis eminentissimis proponendum esse dicebat.

and since he cannot make a good *Free-thinker* of him, he'l make him a Creed-maker: * *For several of his Notions became fundamental Articles of Christian Faith.* It really may be so: for the first Article of My faith is, *I believe in God, and that † He that cometh to God, must believe that he is; and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* And I persuade my self, that *Plato* and his Master, and many other Good men, before our Saviour's manifestation, had the very same Article. And I had rather have my Soul be with those, though they had not the light of the Gospel; than with such of our Moderns, as trample Pearls under their feet, and rend those that lay them before them. But I do not ow this Article to *Plato*, but to God the common Author of Nature, and Father of rational Light. When our Writer specifies more Articles, as borrow'd from *Plato*; your own Divines will take care of him, and do justice to Revelation.

Yes, * *but zealous Christians forg'd several things under Plato's name, with which they had great success in the Conversion of the Heathen World.* He's at his old Charge of Forgery, though it never succeeds in his hands. And what, pray you, did they forge? Why, the *Thirteenth Letter to Dionysius, printed in his Works.* But is this our Author's own Criticism? is it supported by any reasons, hammer'd on his own Anvil? Not the least pretense to those: but he refers to Dr. *Cudworth*, and the business is done. O wretched Gleaner of Weeds! Has he read that noble work, *The Intellectual System*, to no better purpose? One oversight, one error he culls out for his use; and passes over a thousand noble Truths, that might have made him a better Man, and no Writer.

* Pag. 128. † Heb. xi, 6. * Pag. 128.

The Doctor there says, * *It is supposititious and counterfeit by some zealous and ignorant Christian; as there is accordingly a Νοθεύεται or Brand of Bastardy prefix'd to it in all the Editions of Plato's works.* That's true indeed of the *Brand*; but he was a bold Ignorant that put it there. That Letter is as genuine as any of the rest; and was receiv'd in the List, before the Christian Name began. † *Laërtius* an *Epicurean*, who liv'd in *Antoninus Pius's* time, gives a Catalogue of them all; *Επιστολὰς τρισκαίδεκα*, says he, *Epistles Thirteen*: (and so *Suidas* in *Εὐπεράτειν*) but take this Branded one away, and there are but *Twelve*. Among these are *πρὸς Διονύσιον τέτταρες*, *Four*, says he, *to Dionysius*: remove this suspected one, and there remain but *Three*. In a word, all the present *Thirteen* answer exactly to his List both in Names and in Number; except a small various *Lectiō*, *To Aristodorus* the *Xth* Letter, whom He calls *Aristodemus*. And this alone is sufficient to clear the Christians of the pretended Forgery. For surely *Laërtius* could come at Copies of *Plato* 200 years old; since we now have them of 700 or more: and if the present *XIIIth* was there, it must be writ before Christ was born. But to go farther still: this Recension of *Plato's* works he gives not from Himself, but from *Thrasyllus*; who flourishing in the time of *Augustus* must needs be older than Christ. Nay he cites, without the least hint of diversity in the Number, another Recension by *Aristophanes Grammaticus*; who was a Writer 200 years before the Christian *Aera*. And now, if we look into the internal character of the Letter it self, it will have all the marks of Genuineness. 'Tis not some staple Common Place, as most of those forg'd by the

* Cudworth. p.403. † In Platone, III, 61.

Sophists are; but a Letter of Business, circumstanced with great Variety of Things and Persons, all apt and proper to the Writer and to the Date. It was forg'd therefore by no body; much less by any *Christian*: who certainly would never have put Idolatry into a Letter, *made* (as our Writer says) *for the Conversion of the Heathens*. *I have got you*, says *Plato* there, *a Statue of Apollo*; and *Leptines* conveys it to you: it's made by a young and good Workman, whose name is *Leochares*: This was that *Leochares*, afterwards a most famous Statuary, celebrated by *Pliny* and *Pausanias*: and the Time hits exactly, for then he was Young. Which is as great a Mark, that the Letter is genuine; as it is a Demonstration, that no *Christian* forg'd it. And lastly, the Ground of this suspicion, a Passage yet extant in it and quoted by * *Eusebius* and *Theodorit*, is a weak and poor Pretense. *As for the Symbol*, says he, *or private Mark you desire, to know my serious Letters and which contain my real Sentiments from those that do not so; know and remember, that* τῆς μὲν σπουδαίας ἐπιστολῆς Θεὸς ἀρχεῖ, Θεοὶ δὲ τὴν ἑτέραν, *GOD begins a serious Letter, and GODS one that's otherwise*. This the Fathers (and not unjustly) made use of as some indication, that *Plato* really believ'd but One God.

Which notion your Learned Doctor not approving, as contrary (in his opinion) to the *Platonic* System, he decries the Letter as spurious. But this is no Consequence at all, whatsoever becomes of *Plato's* true Thoughts. The *Symbol* he here speaks of, made no part of the Letters, nor began the first Paragraph of them: for here's neither Θεὸς nor Θεοὶ in that manner in any one of the Thirteen. 'Twas extrinsic (if I mistake not) to the Letter, and was a Mark

* *Euseb. Praep. p. 530. Theod. Affect. p. 27.*

at the top of it in these words, Σὺν Θεῷ, if it was a serious one; otherwise, Σὺν Θεοῖς. These two were the common Forms in the beginning of Writings or any Discourse of importance: and in their usage were equivalent and indifferent; Philosophers, as *Xenophon* and others, having it sometimes Σὺν Θεοῖς; and Poets, as *Euripides* and *Aristophanes*, Σὺν Θεῷ. So that *Plato* could not have chosen a Symbol fitter for his turn: being in neither way liable to any suspicion; nor any Inference to be drawn from it to discover his real opinion. And yet I am so much a friend to *Eusebius's* remark; that I would not wish *Plato* had made the Other choice, to put Σὺν Θεοῖς in his Solemn Letters, and Σὺν Θεῷ in his Slight ones.

Had our Writer carried his point in this instance of Forgery, could he have done any great Feats with it? Yes a mighty one indeed! he could have added one *Pious Fraud* more, to a hundred others that are detected ready to his hand. But, pray, who are the discoverers of them? The Christian Priests themselves: so far are they from concealing or propagating them, or thinking their Cause needs them. And I challenge Him and the whole Fraternity to shew One single one that They discover'd, and ow not to the Clergy? Even this mistaken one is pick'd from your *Cudworth*. Most able Masters of Stratagem! ever to hope to vanquish Religion by Arms borrow'd from the Priests? They may be sure, there's no danger of the strong Town's being taken; while the Garrison within can afford to lend the Besiegers Powder.

So far are the modern Christians from protecting old Forgeries; that they are too ready to cry *Spurious* without ground or occasion. As not only this

XIIIth by Dr. *Cudworth*, and before him by *Aldobrandinus*; but another Letter of *Plato's* is call'd in question by *Menagius*. * *There are Thirteen Letters extant*, says he; *among which One to Erastus and Coriscus, quoted by Clemens and Origen, is now wanting: but it seems to have been Spurious, and forg'd by the Christians.* Now all this is mere dream and delusion. That very Letter is expressly nam'd by *Laërtius*, Πρὸς Ερμείαν καὶ Εραστον καὶ Κορίσκον μία, *One*, says he, *to Hermias and Erastus and Coriscus*; and it's the VIth of the present Set of Thirteen; and the Passages thence cited by *Origen*, *Clemens*, and *Theodorit* too, are extant there exactly; and there's nothing in't for the Christian Cause, but what may be prov'd as strongly from several other places of *Plato's* undoubted Works. But what mischief have I been doing? I have prevented our *Free-thinker*: who, after he had dabbled by chance in *Menagius*, might have flourish'd with a new Forgery, and magisterially preach'd it to his credulous Crew.

XLVII.

ARISTOTLE, the next in the *Free-thinking* Row, makes a very short appearance there, and goes quickly off the Stage. His Title hangs by two slender Threads, First, † *That he furnish'd Articles of Faith to the Popish Church, as Plato did to the Primitive.* Now I had thought, that *Creed-making* and *Free-thinking* (even allowing the Charge to be true) had been words of a disparate Sense, that look'd askew at each other: and how both of them come to fit so amicably upon *Aristotle*, surpasses my comprehension. But the matter is no more than this: As the Primitive Christians in their disputes with the

* Aldobrand. & Menag. ad Laërtium III, 61. † P. 128.

Pagans made great use of the *Platonic* Philosophy; not to coin Articles, but to explain them, and to refell the Adversaries objections: so the School-men in the Popish times had recourse to the *Peripatetic*, the sole Systeme then in Vogue. And yet These did not *make* Articles from it: our Author's weak, if he thinks so: neither did *Palavicino* so mean it. The peculiar Doctrines of that Church came from Politics, not Metaphysics; not from the Chairs of Professors, but from the Offices of the Roman Court. And the School-men were their Drudges, in racking *Aristotle* and their own Brains to guild and palliate such gainful Fictions; and to reconcile them, if possible, to Common Sense, which ever hated and spurn'd them.

The Second Title *Aristotle* holds by, is a charge of **Impiety*; which I must own promises well, if it could be made good: for That Word and *Free-thinking* are very closely combined, both by Affinity and old Acquaintance. *He was forc'd*, says he, *to steal privately out of Athens to Chalcis; because Eury-medon a Priest accus'd him of Impiety, for introducing some Philosophical Assertions contrary to the Religion of the Athenians.* The Voucher he brings for this is *Diogenes Laërtius*: but under his old fatality of blundering he summons a wrong witness. *Origen* indeed says something to his purpose, That he was impeach'd *Διὰ τινὰ δόγματα τῆ φιλοσοφίας αὐτοῦ*, for some Doctrines of his Philosophy. But *Laërtius* and *Athenaens* lay the Indictment quite otherwise; For *Impiety*, in writing and daily singing a Paean (a sort of Hymn peculiar and sacred to the Gods) to the Memory of his Patron *Hermias*, Tyrant of *Atarna*, an Eunuch and at first a Slave. This short Poem, in the Dithyrambic Stile, is yet extant in both those Authors:

* Pag. 128.

Ἀρετὰ πολύμοχθε,
Γένει βροτείῳ
Θήραμα κάλλιπον βίῳ, &c.

So the words are to be read and pointed. Neither is there any doubt, but this was the sole Charge which that Sycophant brought against him: for if he had impeach'd his Doctrines, there had been no need of this Stale business; which was then of xx years standing, the death of *Hérmias* happening in *Aristotle's* XLth year, and this Accusation in his LXth. So that Another of our Writer's List is like to give him the Slip: for the Impeachment, we see, was not against the Philosopher, but the Poet; not for *Free-thinking*, but the reverse of it *Superstition*; for deifying a Mortal Man, not for ungoding the Deities.

XLVIII.

But he's now come to *EPICURUS*, * a man distinguish'd in all Ages as a great Free-thinker; and I do not design to rob our *Growing Sect* of the honour of so great a Founder. He's allow'd to stand firm in the List, in the right modern Acceptation of the word. But when our Writer commends his *Virtues towards his Parents, Brethren, Servants; Humanity to all, Love to his Country, Chastity, Temperance, and Frugality*; he ought to reflect that he takes the character from *Laërtius*, a domestic Witness, and one of the Sect; and consequently of little Credit where he speaks for his Master. I could draw a Picture of *Epicurus* in features and colours quite contrary; and bring many old Witnesses, who knew and saw him, to vouch for it's Likeness. But

these things are trite and common among men of true Letters: and our Author and his Pamphlet are too contemptible, to require Common Places in answer.

But the *Noble Quality* of all, the most divine of His and all Virtues was his Friendship; so cultivated in perfection by Him and his Followers, that the Succession of His School lasted many hundred years, after all the others had fail'd. This last part is true in the Author from whom it's taken; but our Gleaner here misunderstands it. The Succession indeed continued at Athens, in the Garden dedicated to it; longer than the other Sects possess'd their first Stations. But it's utterly false, that Professors of it lasted longer in general, than those of the others. Quite contrary: 'tis well known that the *Platonists, Peripatetics, and Stoics*, or rather a Jumble and Compound of them all, subsisted long after the Empire was Christian: when there was no School, no Footstep of the *Epicureans* left in the World.

But how does our Writer prove, that this *noble Quality, Friendship*, was so eminently cultivated by *Epicurus*? Why, *Cicero*, says he, though otherwise a great Adversary to his Philosophical Opinions, gives him this noble Testimony. I confess, it raises my scorn and indignation at this mushroom Scribler; to see him by and by with an air of superiority prescribing to the whole Body of your Clergy, the true method of quoting *Cicero*. They consider not, says he, he writes in *Dialogue*; but quote any thing that fits their purpose, as *Cicero's* opinion, without attending to the Person that speaks it: * *Any false Argument, which he makes the Stoic or Epicurean use, and which they have thought fit to sanctify, they urge it as Cicero's Own.* Out of his own Mouth, this pert Teacher of his Betters:

Ἀλλων ἰατρὸς, αὐτὸς ἔλκεσι βρύων.

For this very noble Testimony, which He urges here as Cicero's own, * comes from the mouth of * *Torquatus* an *Epicurean*: and is afterwards refuted by Cicero in his own name and person. Nay so purblind and stupid was our Writer, as not to attend to the Beginning of his own Passage, which he ushers in thus dock'd and curtal'd: *Epicurus ita dicit &c.* *Epicurus declares it to be his Opinion, that Friendship is the noblest, most extensive, and most delicious pleasure.* Whereas in *Torquatus* it lies thus: † *The remaining Head to be spoke to is FRIENDSHIP; which, if Pleasure be declar'd the Chief Good, You affirm will be all gone and extinct: de qua Epicurus quidem ita dicit, concerning which Epicurus declares his opinion &c.* Where it's manifest, that *Affirmatis, You affirm*, is spoken of and to Cicero. So that here's an *Epicurean* Testimony, of small credit in their own case, though our Writer has thought fit to sanctify it, slur'd upon us for Cicero's; and where the very *Epicurean* declares, that Cicero was of a contrary Opinion.

That an *Epicurean*, who professes to cultivate Friendship for no other end than his own Profit and Pleasure, could not upon that principle be a true and real FRIEND, was the general affirmation of all the Sects besides. Cicero an *Academic* is constant in this Charge; as in the * II Book *De Finibus*, where he answers this passage of *Torquatus*; in *Offices* I, 2, cited here above, and in III, 33. *De Amicitia*, c. 13. *Academ.* II, 46. *De Nat. Deorum* I, 44. 'Tis true, he does acknowledg that several of that Sect were his Own good friends, and men of Virtue and Ho-

* De Fin. I, 20. † De amicitia, quam, si Voluptas summum sit bonum, affirmatis nullam omnino fore. * De Fin. II, 24, 25, 26.

nour: but then he declares he imputed this, *Naturae non Disciplinae*, to their Good Nature and not their Doctrine; their Lives being better than their Principles. I could add numbers of *Greeks* concurring in this accusation: but I'll content my self with *Plutarch*; whom our Writer so extolls for his *Learning* and *Virtue*, and places among his *Free-thinkers*. He impeaches the *Epicurean* notions, as destructive not of * *Friendship* only, but of *Natural Affection*. Nay he summs up their common Character in a few comprehensive words, *Αφιλία, ἀπραξία, ἀθεότης, ἡδυνάθεια, ὀλιγωρία*, † *Unfriendliness, Unactiveness, Ungodliness, Voluptuousness, Unconcern'dness*: These *Qualities*, says he, all *Mankind*, besides *Themselves*, think inherent in that *Seçt*. And what's like to become now of his *Hero's* noble *Quality*? Which of the *Free-thinkers* must we believe? Our Writer has muster'd them together, as if they were all of one side: but when they're turn'd loose into the Pit; they play exactly the same game, as the famous *Irish-man's* Cocks did.

But see the Sneer, for the sake of which this *Epicurean Friendship* was introduc'd by him: * *We Christians*, says he, ought still to have a higher Veneration for *Epicurus*; because even our Holy Religion it self does not any where particularly require of us such a high degree of *Virtue*. So that we are to supply and perfect the Gospel Moral out of an *Atheistical* Systeme; and *Christ* is to go to *Epicurus*, as to the superior *Rabbi*. Impudent, and dully profane! In the Old Testament *Friendship* is celebrated both by excellent Precepts and eminent Examples: but there was no occasion to do it in the New. That Qua-

* *Plutarch contra Coloten* p. 2037, 2041, 2058. † *Idem*, p. 2018. * *Pag.* 129

lity is so exalted and expanded there, that it loses it's very name, and for *Φιλία* *Friendship* becomes *Φιλαδελφία* and *Αγάπη*, *Brotherly Love* and *Charity*. Friendship in the Pagan Notion was * *inter duos aut inter paucos, circumscrib'd within Two persons or a Few*: whence *Aristotle's* Saying was applauded, ὁ ἔστι φίλος, ὁ φίλος, *He that has Friends, has no Friend*: but Christian Friendship or Charity, in the same degree of Affection, is extended to the whole *Houſhold of Faith*; and, in true Good will and Beneficence, to all the race of Mankind. Not that particular Friendships, arising from Familiarity, and Similitude of Humors, Studies, and Interests, are forbid or discourag'd in the Gospel: but there needed no Precept to appoint and *require*, what Nature it self and Human life and mutual Utility sufficiently prompt us to. A Bridle was more necessary than a Spur for these Partial Friendships; where the straight Rule of Moral is often bent and warp'd awry, to comply with Interest and Injustice under a specious Name: as many of the most magnified Instances sufficiently shew. But I'm insensibly here become a Preacher; and invade a Province, which You Clergy-men, and the *English* of all others, can much better adorn.

XLIX.

Before I proceed to the Next in his Row, I shall make a general Remark on our Writer's Judgment and Conduct. He has brought the Authors of three Sects; *Plato*, *Aristotle*, and, with the greatest mark of approbation, *Epicurus*. Pray, how came he to drop the Others? *Aristippus* the *Cyrenaic* cried

* Cicero de Amic. cap. v.

up *Plcasure*, as much as that *Gargettian* did; had Strumpets for his Mistresses and She-disciples, as well as He; and well deserv'd the honour of being in the List. Even *Diogenes* the *Cynic* would have made a laudable *Free-thinker*, for that single Assertion, *That Marriage was Nothing but an empty Name*; and * *He that could persuade, might lie with any Woman that could be persuaded*. Nay even *Zeno* himself, the Father of *Stoicism*, as gruff as he look'd, might have enlarg'd our Writer's Catalogue, for some very *Free Thoughts* about the Indifferency of things; † *That all Women ought to be common, That no Words are to be reckon'd Obscene, That the Secret Parts need no Covering, That Incest and Sodomy have no real Crime nor Turpitude*. Where was our Author's Reading, when he omitted such illustrious Examples, that might have grac'd and dignified his List, full as much as *Epicurus*?

The Remainder of his Role are not Founders, but Followers of the several Sects. But be they One or the Other, Masters or Scholars; what shallowness, what want of Thought in our Writer, to impose and press these upon Us for our imitation in *Free-Thinking*? Many of his Blunders are special, and reach no further than a Paragraph: but here his Stupidity is total; and in the whole Compass and last Tendency of his Passages he's as blind as a Mole. The great Outcry against the Church, which is always in his mouth, is Imposing a Systeme of Opinions, to be swallow'd in the gross, without liberty of examining or dissenting. Allow it: though even This is false, the Impos'd Opinions being few and true and plain; and a large Field left open for freedom and latitude of Thought: as his own Book attests, which is mostly spent in collecting the vari-

* Τὸν πείσας τῇ πειστικῇ οὐσίᾳ. Laërt. † Sextus Empir.

ous Notions of Your Clergy. But how would our Writer mend this? by recommending the Freedom of the Leaders and Followers of the Sects of Philosophy. Ridiculous direction! Bid us copy free Government from *France*, and free Toleration from *Spain*. Those very Sects, all without exception, prescrib'd more imperiously, than Christianity it self does: and not in a few Generals, some easy Articles of a short Creed; but in the whole extent of Reasoning, both Natural and Moral and even Logical Inquiries. Any Scholar of a particular Sect, though commonly enter'd in it young; and by his Parent's choice, not his own; was to be led shackled and hoodwink'd all the rest of his life. He assented and consented to his Philosophical Creed in the lump, and before he knew the Particulars. 'Twas made the highest Point of Honour, never to desert nor flinch: *Scelus erat dogma prodere, 'Twas flagitious, to betray a Maxim: they were all to be defended, sicut moenia, sicut caput & fama, like his Castle, as dear as his Life and Reputation.* And there were fewer Instances then of leaving one Sect for another; than now we have of Defection to Popery, or of Apostacy to Mahometism. And I'll give our Writer one Observation upon *Cicero*, better worth than all he has told us; That in all the Disputes he introduces between the various Sects; after the Speeches are ended, every man sticks where he was before: not one Convert is made (as is common in modern Dialogue) nor brought over in the smallest Article. For he avoided that violation of *Decorum*; he had observ'd in common Life, that all persevered in their Sects, and maintain'd every *Nostrum* without reserve. But of all Sects whatever, the most superstitiously addicted and bigoted to their Master were our Writer's beloved *Epicureans*. In others, some free-thinking or ambitious

Successor

Successor might make a small Innovation, and thence forwards there was some scanty room for domestic Disputation: but the *Epicureans*, those Patterns of *Friendship*, never * disagreed in the least point: all their Master's Dreams and Reveries were held as Sacred as the Laws of *Solon* or the *Twelve Tables*. 'Twas ἀπέβημα, παρὰ νόμιμα, *unlawful, irreligious*, to start one free or new Notion: and so the stupid Succession persisted to the last, in maintaining that the Sun, Moon, and Stars were no bigger than they appear to the Eye, and other such Idiotic Stuff, against Mathematical Demonstration. *O fine Liberty! O Diligence and Application of Mind!* This is our Writer's admired Sect: these his Saints and his Heroes. Could it be reviv'd again at *Athens*, he deserves for his superior Dulness to be chosen Κηποτύραννος, † *The Prince of the Garden*.

L.

We are advanc'd now to PLUTARCH, whom, though a *Heathen Priest*, he will dub a *Free-thinker*. This is very obliging: but in the close of his Catalogue he'll extend the same favour even to the *Jewish* Prophets, and the *Christian* Priests. I perceive his Politics, *totum Orbem civitate donare*, to make all Religions in the World free of his *Growing Sect*. It will grow the better for't; especially if he aggregates to it his *Talapoins* and his *Bonzes*. But wherein has *Plutarch* so oblig'd the Fraternity? In his Treatise of *Superstition*; a long Passage out of which fills * two of our Writer's Pages. And yet the whole is pure Impertinence; and contributes no-

* Laërtius, Numenius, &c. † Laërt. in Epicuro.

* Pag. 132. 133.

thing to any *Free-thinking Purpose* whatever.

The design of *Plutarch* is to shew the deplorable misery of Superstition, when it is in Extremity; when a man imagins the Gods, under the same Idea we now do the Devils; when he fancies them * *ἐμπλήκεις, ἀπίτεις, εὐμεταβόλους, τιμωρηλικούς, ὤμους, μικρολύπεις*, mad, faithless, fickle, revengeful, cruel, and disgusted at the smallest things; when he figures Diana, Apollo, Juno, Venus, as acting under the most frantic and raving Distractions; when he approaches trembling to the Temples, as if they were the dens of Bears, Dragons, or Sea Monsters. When Superstition, says he, is arriv'd to this pitch, it's more intolerable than Atheism it self; nay it produces Atheism, both in Others that see them, and in Themselves, if they can emerge to it. For when Fools fly from Superstition, they run into Atheism the other Exireme, † *ὑπερπηδήσαντες ἐν μέσῳ κειμένην τὴν Εὐσέβειαν*, skipping over Right Religion that lies in the Middle. This is the Sum of *Plutarch's* Book: and what's all this to our Writer's design? Superstition under this Character, is not possible to be found in Christianity; it can be no where but under Pagan and Poëtical Theology. In other * Places the same Author scourges Atheism as severely, as Superstition here: nay he prefers a moderate Superstition infinitely before it. But those Passages are to be drop'd; and this out of so many Volumes is singled out as a Flower: which yet serves to no better end, than to shew our Writer understands neither the Language nor the Sense.

Superstition, says he, (by † way of insertion) by which the Greeks meant The Fear of God, and which Theophrastus in his Characters expressly defines

* *Plut. p. 296. 295.* † *Ibid. 299.* * *Contra Colotem, & alibi,* † *Pag. 132.*

ſo. Not a ſyllable of this true. The *Greeks* meant not abſolutely *Fear*, but an *erroneous and vitious Fear*: and *Theophrastus* defines it, not *δῆος Fear*, but *δειλία*, a *vain Fearfulneſs*. And ſo *Cotta* in *Tully*, where he blames ſuch as our Writer, * *who not only root Superſtition up, in qua eſt INANIS TIMOR Deorum*, which is a *VAIN FEAR* of the *Gods*, but *Religion* too, which conſiſts in the *Pious Worſhip* of them. Nor does the Verſe of *Horace*, quoted by him in the Margin,

Quone malo mentem concuſſa? timore deorum, proves his aſſertion. For there *Malo*, which prece-des, communicates it's ſignification to *Timore*; as if he had ſaid plenarily, *malo timore*, a *wrong and vitious Fear*. The ſame Poët, *Odes I, 35*,

Unde manum juventus

METU DEORUM continuit? quibus

Pepercit aris?

without doubt means *Religion*, and not *Superſtition*: and ſo does *Terence* in *Hecyra*:

Nec pol iſtae METUUNT DEOS, neque has reſpicere deos opinor.

But there are other Strokes in the Verſion it ſelf, that ſhew his Faithfulneſs and Ability. † *But of all Fears*, ſays he, *none confounds a man like the Religionary Fear*. Here on purpoſe he leaves his Guide, the laſt *Engliſh* Tranſlator, who has it, *The vain Religionary*: and the Original, *Φόβος ὁ δὲ δεισιδαιμονίας*, the *Fear ariſing from Superſtition*. He will fix a calumny on *Religion* and the *Fear of God*, in ſight of his Author.

His Juſtneſs of thought is conſpicuous in his Verſion of this Period: * *Even Slaves forget their Maſters in their Sleep: Sleep lightens the Irons of the Fetter'd: their angry Sores, mortified Grangrenes, and pinching Pains allow them ſome intermiſſion at night: but Superſtition*

* *Nat. Deor. I, 42.* † *Pag. 132.* * *Pag. 133.*

will give no truce at night. If *Plutarch* had writ no better in the Original; he would scarce have been now *the most known of all the Antients*, but long ago had been forgot. Mind the absurdity: *THEIR angry Sores*, that is, *of the Fetter'd*: as if all Captives or Criminals or Slaves in Chains *must needs* be full of Sores and Ulcers? And then *Mortified Gangrenes* allow some *intermission* of Pain. If he had consulted Physicians; he might have known, that *mortified* parts can give no pain at all, and consequently have no *intermission*. And lastly, *Sores and Pains* allow *intermission* AT NIGHT: False; for Night is the periodical time of aggravation of Pains. But *Superstition will give no truce* AT NIGHT. Is that such a wonder? even less truce than *in the day*; for darkness and solitude increase the Fears. What a series of Nonsense has he father'd upon *Plutarch*? Of which nothing appears in the Greek; neither *Their Sores*, nor *Mortified Gangrenes*, nor *At nights*. I'll translate the passage word for word: *Sleep lightens the Irons of the Fetter'd: Inflammations of Wounds, Cancerous corrosions of the Flesh, and all the most raging Pains dismiss men, while they sleep: Superstition alone gives no truce nor cessation even in Sleep.* If this is not unworthy of *Plutarch*; the other certainly becomes none but our Writer and his Company.

But now comes a signal Instance of the Lightness of his Hand, and the Heaviness of his Head. In the middle of his long Citation, p. 133, after the words *At noon-day*, he drops the period which immediately follows in the Original; and transfers it into his 134th page, as if it was quoted from another Place, and belong'd to another Head. Why this Legerdemain? Why this mangling and luxation of Passages? The Reason's apparent: for *Plutarch's* own words, as they were represented in the Last

English

English Version, not serving his turn; he quotes the place as it's translated forsooth in the *Characteristics*, a Book writ by an Anonymous, but whoever he is, a very whimsical and conceited Author.

* O wretched Grecians (so that Author render's Plutarch) who bring into Religion that frightful Mien of sordid and vilifying Devotion, ill favour'd Humiliation and Contrition, abject Looks and Countenances, Conster-nations, Prostrations, Disfigurations; and in the Act of Worship, Distortions, constrain'd and painful postures of the Body, wry Faces, beggarly Tones, Mummings, Grimaces, Cringings, and the rest of this Kind. Thus far that nameless Opiniatre: and our worthy Writer introduces it with a grave Air, † That Plutarch thus satirizes the public Forms of Devotion; which yet are such, as in almost all Countries pass for the true Worsh. ip of God. This would partly be true, if those were really the words of Plutarch: but as not one syllable of them is found there, what must we think of this couple of Corruptors and Forgerers? There's nothing in all this, but their own Disfigurations and Distortions of the Original; their own Mummings, and Beggarly Tones, while they pretend to speak in Plutarch's voice.

Plutarch having observ'd, That Superstition alone allows no ease nor intermission even in Sleep; ' for their ' Dreams, adds he, do as much torment them then, ' as their waking thoughts did before. And then ' they seek for expiations of those Visions noctur- ' nal; Charms, Sulfurations, Dippings in the Sea, ' Sittings all day on the ground.

* O Greeks, Inventors of Barbarian Ills,

* Pag. 134. † Ibid.

* Ω βάρβαρ' ἐξευρόντες Ἕλληνες κακὰ,
τῇ δεισιδαιμονίᾳ, πηλώσεις, καὶ ἄβοροράσεις, βαπτισμῶς, ῥίψης
ἐπὶ πέλσῳ, κίχρ᾽ ἀποσκαθίστης, ἀλλοκότης ἀποσκευῆς.
wloje

whose Superstition has devis'd Rowlings in the Mire, and in the Kennels, Dippings in the Sea, Grovelings and Throwings upon the Face, deformed Sitings on the Earth, absurd and uncouth Adorations. This is a verbal Interpretation of that Place; except that for Σαββατισμός, *Sabbatizmas*, I have emended it Βαπτισμός, *Dippings*: and this, If I mistake not, for very good Reasons. Neither Σαββατισμός, nor Σαββαλίζεν is any where else heard of: and *Sabbata* being deriv'd and borrowed from the *Jews*; it's inconsistent with Εξευρόντες, *Greeks Inventors* of such Evils, that are more worthy of *Barbarians*. But, what weighs most, the Author here describes the most painful and sorrowful Instances of Superstition: but the *Sabbata* was a joyful Festival, made up of Ease, Finery, and good Cheer. This is certain from the *Jewish Rituals*, which exact that the very Poorest should wear their best Garments, and eat Three Meals every Sabbath. And that *Plutarch* knew this, appears from his *Symposiacs*, IV, 5. where he says, *The Jews honour the Sabbath, if possible by * drinking and carousing together, or, if that cannot be done, some Wine at least must be tasted*: and from this very Tract, p. 294. where he tells, *That the Jews once suffer'd their Walls to be taken by the Enemy's, without stirring to oppose them, Σαββάτων ὄντων ἐν ἀγνάπλοις καθεζόμενοι, but sitting still, because it was Sabbath, in their New Cloths, (never sent to the Fuller)*: which your last *English Version* absurdly translates, *Sitting on their Tails*. From the whole I suppose it's plain, that *Plutarch* would not mix a Rite, which he knew to be Joyful, with those other Ceremonies the most mournful and desponding. But then Βαπτισμός, *Dippings* in Rivers or Sea, exactly suits with the rest: both Word and

* Πίνειν ἐν οἴκησιν.

Thing being immemorially known in Greece, and the most frequent way of Expiation with melancholy and dejected Bigots. Whence he himself has it a little before, Βάπτισον σεαυτὸν εἰς θάλασσαν, * *Dip your self in the Sea*: and that Verse of Euripides became proverbial;

Θάλασσα κλύζει πάντα τὰνθρώπων κακά:
The Sea does expiate all mortal Ills.

And now I dare ask the Reader; If he has seen a more flagrant Instance of Unfaithfulness and Forgery, than This of our two Writers. *Humiliation and Contrition*, known Words in your *English* Liturgy, are to be traduc'd here under *Plutarch's* name. Where do Those and their other Phrases appear in the Original? Or where do the Rites, He really speaks of, appear in your *Form of Worship*? Who among You rowl themselves in Mire, or wallow in Kennels? A Ceremony, fit only to be injoin'd to such crackbrain'd and scandalous Writers.

LI.

He's got now to his *Latin* Free-thinkers, and the Leader of them is VARRO, † the most Learned of all the Romans. Now Varro being a known Follower of the Old Academy, ** *Veteris Academicæ Sectator*, that is, a true Platonist; we know all his System of Theology at once: and he cannot be call'd a *Free-thinker*, in either of the Senses that our Writer plays and shuffles with. Not an *Atheist*; because the *Platonic* Notions had †† a great Conformity with Christianity: not a free Reasoner or Innovator; because being adductus & juratus, ingaged and sworn to a Sect

* Pag. 288. † Pag. 134. ** Cic. Acad. I, 2. August. de Civ. Dei VI, 2. VII, 17. XIX, 1, 3, 4. †† Pag. 127.

in the lump, he can scarce arrive to the name and dignity of one of our Writer's *Half-Thinkers*.

Varro, who had made more *Reſerches* into the Antiquities of *Italy*, than any man before him, publiſh'd two large and voluminous Books, long ago loſt, which he call'd *Antiquitates Rerum Humanarum & Divinarum*. In the latter of theſe, *About Divine Affairs*, the ſhort Remains of which are chiefly preſerv'd in *St. Auſtin De Civitate Dei*, he diſtributed Theology into *Poëtical* or *Fabulous*, *Philosophical* or *Physical*, and *Civil*. *Mythicon*, * ſays he, *appellant, quo maxime utuntur Poëtae*; *Phyſicon*, *quo Philoſophi*; *Civile*, *quo populi*. *Primum, quod dixi, in eo ſunt multa contra dignitatem & naturam Immortalium ficta. In hoc enim eſt, ut deus alius ex capite, alius ex femore ſit, alius ex guttis ſanguinis natus: in hoc, ut Dii furati ſint, ut adulteraverint, ut ſerviverint homini. Denique in hoc omnia diis attribuuntur; quae non modo in hominem, ſed etiam quae in contemtiffimum hominem cadere poſſunt. In the FIRST*, ſays he, *are contain'd many fables, contrary to the dignity and nature of Immortal Beings; that one God ſhould be born out of a Head (Minerva) another out of a Thigh (Bacchus) another from drops of Blood (Venus, Furies); that Gods were Thieves (Mercury) were Adulterers (Juppiter) were Slaves to a Man (Apollo); any thing in ſhort, that may be ſaid not only of a Man, but of the moſt deſpicable of Men. This Paſſage our learned Writer cites, and uſhers it in thus: Varro, the moſt learned of all the Romans, ſpeaking of THEIR Theology, ſays: How of Their's, that is, the Civil; when he expreſſly ſays it of the Mythic or Poëtical? Was this downright Dulneſs in our Writer, or has it a mixture of Trick and Knavery? It's very plain, both in that Chapter of *St. Auſtin*, and in many other Places*

* *Auguſt. de Civ. Dei. VI, 5.*

of that excellent Work, That *Varro* with great freedom censur'd the *Poëtical* Theology; as all Sects whatever did, particularly the * *Stoics*: but the *Civil* or the *Roman* he was so far from condemning, that he encourag'd and multiplied it. He counted that Performance, † a great Benefit to his Country-men, both in showing them the Gods they were to worship, and what Power and Office every God had; and ** in many places religiously exhorted them to the worship of those Gods: many uncouth Names of which he rais'd out of oblivion; assign'd to the most fordid offices of low and servile Life. And I verily believe, neither *Cicero*, nor any one Gentleman of that time, knew half of those Gods; till *Varro* brought them to light out of the obscure Superstitions of mean Artificers and Rustics. Where then was our Writer's Judgment, to list *Varro* among his *Free-thinkers*? but his Learning too is as much display'd in his accurate Version. That period above, *Ut deus alius ex capite, &c.* he renders thus: *As Gods begotten and proceeding from other Gods Heads, Legs, Thighs, and Blood.* Why, in the name of *Priscian*, is *alius ex capite*, out of other Gods Heads? 'Tis manifest the illiterate Scribler for *alius* read it *alius* in the Genitive. And why forsooth must he add *Legs*, and pin his own Ignorance on his Author? Does any Fable in the Poëtic System make a God born out of a *Leg*? And why must plain *Natus* in the *Latin* be transmuted into *Begotten and proceeding*? for the pleasure of a silly Fling at the *Nicene* and *Athanasian* Creeds? Surely such a series of Profaneness, Ignorance, and Non-sense could never procede from any *Head* but such a one as His is.

* See Remark XLV. pag. 33. † August. IV, 22. ** Ibid. 31.
Varro ad deos colendos multis locis velut religiosus hortatur.

But he has another Passage from *Varro* (recorded too by *St. Austin*) where * *de Religionibus loquens*, speaking of Religious Institutions, he says, *Multa esse vera, quae non modo vulgo scire non sit utile; sed etiam tametsi falsa sint, aliter existimare populum expediat: & ideo Graecos Teletas & Mystéria taciturnitate parietibusque clausisse*: That many things are TRUE, which are not only not fit for the *Vulgar* to know; but even if they should be False, it's fit the *Vulgar* should think otherwise: and that therefore the Greeks kept their Initiations and Mysteries in Secresy and within private Walls. This Passage our Writer proposes, as a Discovery of *Varro's Free-thinking*. Now I should have thought it the very Reverse. For first he says, *The things are TRUE*: that's contrary, no doubt, to our Writer's *Free-thinking*: and then, *That though they should be FALSE* (not that he says, they are false) *the People ought not to know it*: that's flat and plain *Priestcraft*, our Writer's Hate and Aversion. How comes it then, that so sagacious a Person is enamor'd of this Passage? Why truly, as he has manag'd it, it will serve and bend to his purpose. For the Period *Multa esse vera*, *That many things are TRUE*, he has translated, *Many things FALSE in Religion*. What? *Vera, False*? *Non*, an Affirmative? 'Tis time for your Governors *de les petites Maisons* to take care of such a Scribler. But, besides his tricks in the Version, he shews his flight of hand upon the Original. For instead of, *Sed etiam tametsi falsa sint*, he exhibits it, *Et quaedam tametsi falsa sint*; and so makes *Varro* say positively, *That somethings are false*. Now, what † foundation for this in any Manuscript or printed Copy whatsoever? Is this his Honesty in Citations? Is this He, that upbraids others with corrupting and misapplying of Passages?

* Aug. IV, 31. † Pag. 93.

Yes; but St. *Austin*, after he had recited this Passage, subjoins his own Remark; *Hic certe totum consilium prodidit velut sapientium, per quos civitates & populi regerentur: Here Varro*, says he, *has discover'd* (unawares or by an obscure hint) *the whole Design, as of Wise Statesmen, by whom Societies were to be govern'd.* This place our * Author has borrow'd; but he might have produc'd more from the same Father; where he presses hard upon *Varro*, for glozing and soothing the *Civil Religion* contrary to his own Sentiments and Conscience: since he owns, that *if he had* † *founded a new Community, he would have settled the Public Worship, more ex Naturae formula, according to the model of Nature; but now he was to explain it, as he found it establish'd.* But of what use is this to our Author? If there's any relish of *Free-thinking* in't, it belongs to St. *Austin*, and not to *Varro*. The Christian Father speaks home, and condemns the *Civil Theology* equally with the *Poetical*: but the Learned Pagan, being himself a Minister of State, and fearful of giving Offense (at that time especially, when the *Greek Philosophy* had not yet been made popular in the *Latin Tongue*) us'd great reserve and dissimulation: and though in many parts he corrected the publick Superstition, in the main he fix'd and promoted it. Not that he was himself Superstitious; for in that very work he hints his own Sentiments, though occultly and by the by: he declares, ** that for above 170 years, the old *Romans* worship'd the Gods without any Images: *which Manner*, says he, *if it had still continued, the Gods would be adored with more purity and holiness:* and for This he cites the *Jewish Nation*, as a witness and example: and concludes with a declaration,

* Pag. 135. † August. IV, 3. V, 4. ** August. IV, 31. Quod si adhuc mansisset, castius dii observarentur.

That they who first instituted Statues of the Gods, & metum populis demississe & errorem addidisse, both took away the Fear of the Gods from the people, and gave them Erroneous Notions of them: where note again by the way, that *Metus* is Religion, and not Superstition. And in other of his Writings, he on all occasions detected the Artifices of knavish Impostors: as in that * at *Falisci* near *Rome*, where a few Families call'd *Hirpi*, pretended to have the Gift of walking bare-foot upon burning Cinders without being sing'd, at an annual Sacrifice to *Apollo*: which *Virgil* magnificently expresses, *Aen. XI*, 786.

*Cui pineus ardor acervo
Pascitur, & medium freti pietate per ignem
Cultores multa premimus vestigia pruna.*

On which place *Servius* the ancient Scholiast remarks; That *Virgil* indeed says it was a Miracle; but *Varro*, who is every where an Overthrower of Religion, says their Feet were medicated and secur'd by an Ointment. How would our Writer have flourish'd, if in his desultory Gleanings he had met with this Passage, *Varro ubique expugnator religionis*? He would have slighted *St. Austin*, and adhered solely to the *Grammarians*, for proving *Varro* a Free-thinker. And yet upon the very same foot, he must take *St. Austin* too into his List, and every particular Christian, that liv'd in the times of Paganism. For as *Servius* here by *Religio* means the *Vulgar, Popular, Civil Religion*; the Christians were in a compleat sense, both in Notion and Fact, *Expugnatores, the Overthrowers* of such Religion. And how little then is all this to our silly Writer's purpose? The more *Varro's* and Great Men he quotes for disbelieving Pagan Idolatry; the more Justice he does to Gospel Truth, and the more Reason to the Christian Establishment,

* *Plin. Hist. VII*, 2.

LII.

The next, that enters the Scene, though he speaks but one Sentence, is **the Grave and Wise CATO the Censor, who will for ever live in that noble Free-thinking Saying, recorded by Cicero; which shews that he understood the whole Mystery of the Roman Religion as by Law Establish'd: I wonder, said he, how one of Our Priests can forbear laughing, when he sees another.* Very short, you see, but very pithy: and our Writer thought he made a most capital Jest and spiteful Insinuation, when he said *The Roman Religion as by Law Establish'd.* 'Tis easy to know what he alludes to: but by that time I have done this Remark and the rest, his own Ignorance and Stupidity will be so dragd into the Light; that I my self shall hereafter wonder, *If any of Your Priests can forbear laughing, when he sees a Free-thinker.*

CATO the Elder, *homo antiqua virtute & fide*, a true old Roman, as his Country-men were before the Grecian Literature got settlement among them, liv'd and died a Priest himself, *e Collegio Augurum*; was as knowing and tenacious of the Legal Superstitions, as any of his time: so as †*he complain'd that many Auspices, many Auguries were quite lost and forgot by the negligence of the Society of Augurs.* He was an enemy to all Foreign Rites, and jealous of the least innovation in the Antient Religion and Laws. He procur'd in the Senate, that *Carneades* the Academic, and *Diogenes* the Stoic, Embassadors from *Athens*, should immediatly be dismiss'd, that they might not corrupt the Youth. He had an aversion

* Pag. 135. † Multa Auspicia, multa Auguria, quod Cato ille sapiens queritur, negligentia Collegii amissa plane & deserta sunt. Cic. Divin. I, 15.

to all Philosophy : in one of his Books he said, *Socrates* (the first in our Author's List) was a * *prating and turbulent Fellow*, for introducing Opinions contrary to his Country Laws and Customs. Now one would hardly have gues'd, that a man of this Character should ever make a good *Free-thinker*. I am rather of opinion, that if *Cato* in his *Censorship* had found one of that Species : he would have taken quicker and better care of him, than your patient Government is like to do of Yours.

But so it is: our Writer has met with a *Bon Mot* of this *Cato's*; which, according to his shallow Understanding and silly Interpretation, he presages *will ever live as a noble Free-thinking Saying*. I'll give it in *Tully's* words, from whom he here cites it; † *Vetus autem illud Catonis admodum scitum est, qui mirari se aiebat, Quod non rideret haruspex, haruspicem cum vidisset*: and he might have added another place, which, since *Cato* is not mention'd there, shews it became Proverbial; ** *Mirabile videtur, Quod non rideat haruspex, cum haruspicem viderit*. This our Author has thus render'd; *I wonder, said Cato, how one of OUR PRIESTS can forbear laughing, when he sees another*. What? *Haruspex* a Priest in general? And one of OUR, that is, the *Roman* Priests? Then *Cato*, who was One and liv'd to be Senior of them, would have libel'd himself: he had ridiculed the Laws establish'd, which he always zealously maintain'd: he had become, what he call'd *Socrates*, a *prating turbulent Fellow*, in doing at *Rome*, what He did at *Athens*. Surely there must be some Mistake: and we shall find it lies no where else, but in our Writer's empty noddle.

* Λάλον καὶ βίαιον. Plut. in Catone p.640. † Divin. II, 24.
** Nat. Deor. I, 26.

The whole matter is but this: The College of *Augurs*, of which *Cato* then was one, was of *Roman* Institution, founded by *Numa*: their Divination was made from observations of Birds and several other things within the Sphere of their Discipline; and as they were Persons of the first Quality, and all things were to be done *Auspicato* by their direction; they had vast Influence and Authority in all great Affairs both of Peace and War. But besides this Native Institution, a foreign and exotic Sect of Diviners had gradually grown in fashion, the *Haruspices* of *Tuscany*; whose skill and province reach'd to three things, *Extæ*, *Fulgura*, & *Ostenta*, *Entrals* of *Cattel*, *Thunders*, and *Monstrous Births*. That These were proper to *Hetruria*, from one *Tages* their Founder; and not establish'd at *Rome*, but sent for and fetch'd thither upon occasions, may easily be prov'd. They are scarce ever mention'd without that hint: *Haruspex Etruscus*, says *Livy*, V, 15. *Haruspices ex Etruria acciti*, XXVII, 37. *Haruspicum scientiam ex Etruria*, says *Cicero*, *Divin.* I, 2. *Haruspices ne ex Etruria arcessentur*, II, 4. *Nostorum Augurum & Etruscorum & Haruspicum* (dele &) *Nat. Deor.* II, 4. and so *Lucan.* I, 584.

Haec propter, placuit Tuscos de more vetusto

Acciri vates. and *Martial* III, 24;

Quem Tuscus mactare deo cum vellet Haruspex.

This being observ'd and prov'd, the whole Reason and Drift of *Cato's* Saying will immediatly appear.

For it oftend happen'd, that this Pack of *Hetruscan* Soothsayers gave their Answers quite cross to what the *Roman* Augurs had given: so that the two Disciplines clash'd; the one forbidding as unlucky and unsuccessful, what the other had allow'd as auspicious and prosperous. An example of which is

recorded by *Cicero*, *Nat. Deor.* II, 4. While *Tiberius Gracchus* was creating new Consuls; one of the Nominators suddenly fell down dead: however *Gracchus* proceeded and finish'd the Creation. But soon after the People had scruples about it, and the *Haruspices* being consulted laid, the Creation was vitious: *How?* says *Gracchus*, in a great rage: *I not create them right, who am both Consul, and Augur, and acted Auspiciously? Do You, * Tuscans and Barbarians, pretend to correct and controul the Auspices of the Romans? And so he bid them be gone.* This was done A. U. C. 591. when *Terence's Heautontimorumenos* was acted, and while *Cato* was alive.

'Tis true, *Gracchus* in this Instance, having recollected himself, found he had omitted one Circumstance directed by the Books of *Auguries*; and so submitted to the *Tuscans*, and added much to their Reputation. But however it's plain from hence, that there was no great kindness between the *Roman Augurs* and Them. For their Disciplines proceeded upon quite different Principles; if the One was suppos'd true, the Other must generally be false. *Cato* therefore, without the least grain of *Free-thinking*, nay out of the true Spirit of Superstition, stood tightly for *Numa's Auguries*; believ'd every tittle of them; and consequently took the *Tuscan Tribe* for a set of Cheats and Impostors. Add to this, his Hatred to all Rites that were Foreign and Exotic; add his own Interest as an *Augur*, against those Rivals in Credit and Authority: and then wonder, if you can, why *Cato* should wonder, *How one Haruspex could forbear laughing, when he saw another.*

And now take a view of our Writer's Learning and Sagacity: *Haruspex* render'd a *Priest*; which would include in the affront both *Cato* himself and

* *An vos Tusci ac barbari &c.*

all his Collegues: and our *Priests* forsooth; when the *Satir* is solely pointed at *Tuscans* and *Forciners*? And what's now become of his *ever living* Saying? Where are now the footsteps of that *noble Free-thinking* in't? of *understanding the whole Mystery of the Roman Religion as by Law establish'd*? *Cato* took the *Tuscan's* for Cheats, conscious of their own Juggles: therefore he knew the *whole mystery*, and took Himself too for a Cheat. What, *Cato the Grave and the Wise*? A consequence, only fit for our Scribler. It was no *Free-thinking* in *Cato*, but pure *Polemic Divinity*. He adhered superstitiously to *Numa's* and his Country's Rites: and took the *Tuscan Discipline* for Nonsense, without being one jot Wiser himself. And if this makes him a *Free-thinker*; at this rate the *Growing Sect* will multiply prodigiously: all the *Pagans*, that ate Fish or Pigeons, are to be admitted *Free-thinkers*; because they contradicted the *Syrians*, who superstitiously abstain'd from Both: The *Tentyrites* of *Egypt* were certainly *Free-thinkers*; because they destroy'd and fed on *Crocodiles*, which the *Ombites* their Neighbors worship'd as Gods: nay the very *Tuscan Haruspices* were passable *Free-thinkers*; for no doubt they reparteed upon *Cato*; and thought as meanly of the *Roman Divinations*, as He did of *Theirs*.

To shew our learned Writer, what a *Free-thinker Cato* was; I'll give him some choice Instances out of his Book *DE RE RUSTICA*; which is certainly *Cato's* own, and so quoted by all the Antients: * his annual offering to *Mars Silvanus* for the health of his Black-Cattel: ^b another to *Juppiter Dapalis*; ^c another to *Ceres, Janus, Jove* and *Juno*: ^d an Attone-ment for the Lopping of a wood: ^e a Sacrifice for the Lustration of his Grounds, to preserve the Grass, Corn, Fruits, Cattel, and Shepherds from disasters;

* *Cato de Re Rust.* c. 83. ^b 132. ^c 134. ^d 139. ^e 141.
I 2 and

and all these with their several Ceremonies, as aukward and absurd as those of the *Pawawers*. But the prime of all is his Charm for a *Luxation* or *Fracture*; which I'll recommend to our Writer with a *Probatum est*, when he has any thing *broken or out of Joint*. * *Take*, says he, *a green Reed, and slit it along the middle: throw the knife upwards; and join the two parts of the Reed again, and tie it so to the place broken or disjointed; and say this Charm, Daries, dardaries, astataries, dis-sunapier: or this, Huat hanat huat, ista pista fista, domiabo damnaustra. This will make the Part sound again.* Is not this an excellent Specimen of *Cato's Freethinking*? Does not this Gibberish demonstrate his Penetration into *Mysteries*? Is it not worthy of that refin'd Age, when *Consuls* and *Dictators* were chosen from the Plough? Nor can our Author say, that This is a spurious Receipt: for † *Pliny* mentions this very Charm under *Cato's* Name and Authority; though he excuses himself from repeating it, because of it's Silliness. But as poorly as our Writer comes off with *Cato* the Elder; I fancy he'll anon have still worse Success with *Cato* the Younger.

LIII.

But before he comes to Him, he introduces *CICERO*, as a distinguish'd and eminent *Free-thinker*; in which Section he seems to have taken peculiar Pains; and to strut with an air of Arrogance, quite above his ordinary Mien. He summons all your Divines to receive his Laws for reading and quoting; and to govern themselves by his Instructions, both in the Pulpit and the Press. But how does this

* Cap. 160. † *Nat. Hist.* xvii, in fine. Carmen contra luxata membra, jungenda arundinum fissurae, cujus verba inferere non equidem serip ausim, quamquam a Catone prodita.

Scenical Commander, this Hero in Buskins perform? So wretchedly and forrily; so exactly to the same Tune and his wonted Pitch; that he has not struck one right Stroke, either in *Cicero's* general Character, or in any passage of His, that he quotes incidentally.

The First word he opens with is this, * *That though Cicero was Chief Priest and Consul, &c.* And what does he mean by *Chief Priest*? No doubt he means *Pontifex Maximus*: for no other word in all the Sacerdotal Colleges of the *Romans* can admit of that Version. Now a List and Succession of the *Pontifices Maximi* (*Metellus Dalmaticus, Mucius Scaevola, Metellus Pius, Julius Caesar, Aemilius Lepidus*) which concludes all *Cicero's* time, was ready drawn to our Writer's hand both in *Parvinius's Fasti*, and in *Bosius de Pontificatu Maximo*. He was so far from being *Chief Pontif*, that he was never of that Order; not one of the whole XV: as appears from his Oration *Pro Domo ad Pontifices*, spoken in his *Lth* year. He was a *Priest* indeed, as I have said before; being made *Augur* in his *LIVth* year, and succeeding *Crassus* the Younger, who with his Father was slain in *Persia*. What scandalous and puerile Ignorance is this, in a Teacher forsooth of the Clergy, who are Teachers appointed? *Cicero* the *Chief Priest*? Or rather our Writer the *Chief Blunderer*? He never meddles with the word *Priest*; but Nonsense is his Expiation for't: it sticks to him like *Hercules's Shirt*; and will last him, like that, to his Funeral.

Another Observation he thus dresses, † *That Cicero gives us his own Picture, and that of the greatest part of the Philosophers, when he produces this as an Instance of a Probable opinion, That they who study*

* Pag. 135. † Pag. 136.

Philosophy, don't believe there are any Gods: *that is, That there existed no such Gods as were believ'd by the People.* Now grant our Author this; and yet he obtains no more by it, than that *Cicero* with most of the Philosophers disbeliev'd the *Poetical* and *Civil* Theology of the *Pagans*. And if this *Picture* so much pleases him, or has such strong Lines and Features of *Free thinking* in't; the very Herd of Christians have a better Title to it, than any of the Philosophers. We are all *Free-thinkers* on that Topic; unless our Writer dissents from us, and would recur to the old Worship of *Bacchus* and *Venus*.

But the Misery of it is, This passage of *Cicero* is quite misrepresented; nay it proves the very Reverse to what he infers from it. * *Every Argumentation*, says *Tully*, ought either to be *Probable*, or *Demonstrative*. A thing *Probable* is either what is generally true, or what is so in Opinion and common Conceit. Of the first sort This is one, If she's a Mother, she loves her Son: Of the second which consists in Opinion, *hujusmodi sunt probabilia*, these are Examples: *Impiis apud Inferos poenas esse paratas: Eos qui Philosophiae dent operam, non arbitrari deos esse: That Torments in Hell are prepared for the Impious: That Philosophers don't think, there are Gods.* Where it's evident to a sagacious Reader, that *Tully* gives two Instances of Probables, which really he thought False. For *Probabile* in *Latin* takes in several Ideas of your *English*, *Probable*, *plausible*, *likely*, *specious*, *seeming*; whether it really be true or false, *sive id falsum est sive verum*, as *Tully* here says express. The first of these about *Torments of Hell* was then a current, passable, probable Assertion: but *Tully* himself † disbeliev'd it, and gives it here as a Notion vulgar but false. And the second likewise, *That Philosophers are Atheists*,

* De Inventione I, 29. † Tuscul. I, 5, 6. & alibi.

was a Staple Mob opinion : especially at that time, when *Lucretius*, *Amasinius*, and other *Epicureans* were the sole Retailers in *Latin*; that Sect having in that Language got the Start of the rest. But the Orator here exhibits it, not as a true, but a false Probable; and contrary to his own * Sentiment and Example. And what's become now of the *Picture*? 'Tis like the old Story of the Horse painted Tumbling; which posture being not lik'd by the purchaser, upon inverting the Piece the Horse was a Running. Our Writer here imagin'd, That *Cicero* was *portray'd* an Infidel: and to his great disappointment he's painted a Believer. But see by the way, the great Sincerity of our Writer: In his marginal Citation, he has dropt the first Instance about *Hell-Torments*; and given the latter only about *Believing no Gods*; and to disguise it the more; for *Hujusmodi sunt probabilia*, he puts it *Est probabile*: where any person, who looks no farther, must certainly be impos'd on. But if our Writer had given Both; the vigilant Reader without stirring from the Margin had detected the Nonsense. For the two Instances of Probable being both of a kind, either both true or both false; if the first is suppos'd false, the latter must be so too; and so our Writer is frustrated. But if the latter is suppos'd true (as our Writer propounds it) then the first must be allow'd so too about the *Torments of Hell*: which our Writer abhorring as the most gasty *Picture* in nature, remov'd it out of his Book: and so the Reader seeing but One, could not discover the Painters true meaning. O Dulness, if this was done by chance! O Knavery, if it was done by design!

* Tuscul. De Legibus, &c.

His next Remark upon *Cicero* is still more *mumping* and *beggarly*; that were it not for his Pride and Insolence, I should really commiserate him. He'll prove out of the *Tusculan Questions*; that *Cicero* was against the *Immortality of the Soul*: which is exactly, as if he should prove from these Remarks of mine, that I am a Member of his Club. But of that anon: in the mean time, as a Cast of his occasional Learning, he makes the *Dialogist* to be *T. Pomponius ATTICUS*, a great Friend of *Cicero's*, who writ a whole volume of Letters to him. The Interlocutor in the *Tusculans* is mark'd by the Letter A, as *Cicero* is by M: and though some old Copies and Authors too believ'd A signified *Atticus*; yet what was pardonable in Them, is at this time of day, and in a book of Defiance too, a most shameful Blunder in our Writer. The person A was *Adolescens*, a *Youth*; as appears from II, 11; *At tu, adolescens, cum dixisses &c*: how therefore can this be *Atticus*, who was then an Old Man, as your * Learned *Davissius* remarks on the place? *Cicero*, when he writ the *Tusculans* was in his great Climacteric; and *Atticus* was Two years older than He. For *Nepos* says in his Life; *That the Caesarian Civil War broke out, when Atticus was about LX, cum haberet annos circiter sexaginta*: but *Cicero* was then LVIII. Again he says, *Atticus* died LXXVII years old compleat, *Domitio & Sosio Coss*: and by that reckoning too he was born Two years before *Cicero*. So that our Writer has made a hopeful Youth of him, when he was going of LXV: and makes *Cicero* call a man Youth; who was older than himself. Besides this, who, but our Mirrour of Learning, could be ignorant; that *Atticus* liv'd and died an *Epicurean*? But this

* *Atticus tunc temporis senex erat. Davis. ad Tuscul. I, 5.*

Dialogist is intirely against that Sect, * as appears through the whole. And lastly, what I have noted above in my XLIXth Remark, If *Atticus* here was the Discourser with *Cicero*, he would adhere to his old Principles, and be brought over in nothing: but this *Youth*, this Inquirer, is a Convert throughout; and convinc'd by good Arguments recedes from every thing that he advances at first. So that there's a vast difference in the Manner of Dispute, that's exhibited in the *Tusculanae*, from what appears In *Academicis*, *De Finibus*, *De Natura Deorum*, and *De Divinatione*. In the latter no man concedes; in the *Tusculans* no man resists. These last were *Scholae*, as *Cicero* from the *Greeks* calls them, Discourses without an Antagonist; rather *Audiences*, than *Conferences*. Which Manner, † he says, was us'd among all the Philosophers, even in the Academy it self: *Qui quaesivit aliquid, tacet: He that has propos'd a Question, holds his tongue.* For as soon as he has said, It seems to me that Pleasure is the Chief Good; the Philosopher disputes against it in a continued discourse: so as it may easily be understood, how they that say a thing seems to them, are not really of that opinion, but want to hear it refuted. This very Manner, which *Cicero* here describes in his year LXII, he executed the year after in his *Tusculanae*: where when A the Auditor says, It seems to me, That Death is an Evil; That Pain is the greatest of all Evils; That Grief or Uneasiness may happen to the Wise-man; That the Wise-man is not free from all Perturbation of Mind; That Virtue alone is not sufficient to a Happy Life (which make the Subject of the V Books) it's plain by *Cicero's* own Comment, that A is of contrary Sentiments, and desires to have all those Positions confuted: which *Cicero* performs to his satisfaction and applause.

* See *Tuscul.* I. 23, 32, 34. † *De Finibus* II, 1.

This being observ'd and premis'd; let us now see, what our sagacious Writer can fetch from the *Tusculans*.

*Why, Tully, * says he, after having mention'd the Various Notions of Philosophers about the nature of the Soul, concludes from them, That there can be nothing after Death.* Now if a Foreigner may judge of your Language, THE VARIOUS Notions can mean no less than *Singulas Opiniones*, the several and even all the Notions of the Philosophers: which being suppos'd, our Writer will stand convicted either of such Dullness or such Impudence, as nothing can match but his own Book. After Cicero had enumerated the several Opinions about the Soul, That it was the Brain, or the Heart, or the Blood, or Fire, or Breath, or Harmony, or Nothing at all, or an Essential Number, or a Rational Substance, or a Fifth Essence; which soever of these, says he, is true; it will follow that Death is either a Good, or at least not an Evil. For if it be Brain, Blood, or Heart, it will perish with the whole Body; if Fire, it will be extinguish'd; if Breath, it will be dissipated; if Harmony, it will be broke; not to speak of those, that affirm it is Nothing. † *His sententiis omnibus, nihil post mortem pertinere ad quemquam potest.* According to all these Notions (the Seven last repeated) there can be no Concern nor Sensation after Death: Death therefore is no Evil. *Reliquorum autem sententiae &c.* But the Others Opinions (the Three remaining) give hope, that the Soul, after it has left the Body, mounts up to Heaven as it's proper Habitation: Death therefore may be a Good. Now can any thing be plainer, than the Tour of this Paragraph? Ten opinions there are in all; the first Seven make Death no Misery; the last Three make it a Happiness. What then was our Writer's Soul? Was it Brains, or Guts, or rather

* Pag. 136. † Tuscul. I, 11.

Nothing at all, when he thus maim'd and murder'd the Sense of his Author. *From THE VARIOUS Notions he concludes!* As if the *Seven* were all he had mention'd? As if the *Three* last were not those He espous'd? As if the Authors of the *Seven* were not in His esteem, *Plebeii & minuti Philosophi*, *Plebeian and puny Philosophers*, not worthy of that Name? But our Writer has so long desponded of *mounting up to Heaven*: that he cannot bear it even in the Stile of a Pagan: it raises an envious Despair, and spreads it over his Soul. A most just and proper punishment for such Reprobates to Immortality!

Virtutem videant, intabescantque relictæ.

But our Writer goes stumbling on, and adds, * *That as to Plato's Arguments for the Immortality of the Soul*, Cicero says to his Dialogist, *Let us not produce them, and let us lay aside all our Hopes of Immortality. By which the other understood him to deny the Immortality of the Soul; as is evident from his Answer which follows: What? do you disappoint me, after you had rais'd in me such an Expectation? Truly I had rather be mistaken with Plato, whom I know how much you esteem, and whom I admire on your authority, than be in the right with others.*

Even my Pen would refuse to be employ'd in such Trash; were it not to chastise our Writer's Confidence; who unqualified to understand one single Page of Cicero, presumes to set up for his Commander and Patron,

Ἀνδρὸς, ὃν εὖ δ' αἰνεῖν τοῖσι κακοῖσι θέμις,

nay (which all the Muses avert) for his Revisor and Editor. Your Gentry, it seems, were hence forward to taste Cicero through the fetid and poisonous Notes of the *Atheistical Sect*. † *If Cicero's works*, says he, *come once to be generally read, as of all hu-*

* Pag. 137. † Pag. 140.

man Writings they best deserve! Goodly and Gracious! What an Honour is this to *Cicero's* Ashes? This is what the old Tragic lik'd, *Laudari a laudato viro*. But pray, when was it, that He was *not* generally read? or rather, when did the stupid Sect begin to read him? By the patterns they have given us; they have just as much Title to recommend *Cicero*, upon their own Taste and Skill; as before they had to recommend the * *Samaritan Chronicle*.

In the Passage now before us; After the Orator had prov'd the Immortality of the Soul from Authority and Tradition, † *the Agreement of all Antiquity, the Consent of all Nations, the Doctrine of the Pythagorean School*: Those Antients, says he, seldom gave Reasons for their Opinions, their Scholars acquiescing in the bare Precept and Maxim: But *Plato* did not only transmit the Doctrine, but produc'd Reasons and Arguments to establish it: *Sed rationes etiam attulisse; quas, nisi quid dicis, praetermittamus, & hanc totam spem immortalitatis relinquamus; ** which Arguments, unless You say otherwise, let us pass over; and lay aside this whole Hope of Immortality*. The meaning of which is most plain; if we reflect, that the Question here to be debated was only this, *It seems to me that Death is an Evil*: which *Cicero* had already refuted, even upon the Scheme of the Soul's Extinction: without need of engaging deeper in the proofs of Immortality. So that here in the Socratic way of Dialogue, with Εἰρωνεία, *Dissimulation and Urbanity*, he seems willing to drop the Cause, on purpose to raise the Interlocutor's appetite. Who well knowing, this was but a Feint, and that *Cicero* wanted a little Courting to procede, *What?* says he, *do you now leave me, after you have drawn*

* Remark XXVII. † Omnem Antiquitatem. Consensus nationum omnium. ** Tusc. I, 17.

me into the highest Expectation? Pray, procede with Plato's Arguments: quocum errare mehercule malo, quam cum ISTIS vera sentire, with whom (in this affair) I'd rather chuse to be mistaken, than be in the right with THOSE mean Souls, that are content with Extinction. Upon which says the Orator to him, Maeste virtute, God bless you with that brave Spirit: I my self too should willingly mistake with Him: and so he enters upon and exhausts the whole Platonic Reasoning for the Soul's Immortality. Now what Odness, what Perverseness of mind in our Scribler, to infer from this Paragraph, That the Interlocutor thought Cicero denied the Immortality of the Soul? Is it not just the Reverse? But what need I wonder: when none but such a crook'd and cross grain'd Block could ever be shap'd into an Atheist?

And now we are come to his general Character of Cicero, and the new Key to his Works, which our Bungler has made for the use of your Clergy. *He profess'd, he says, the Academic or Sceptic Philosophy; and the only true method of discovering his Sentiments is to see, what he says Himself, or under the Person of an Academic. To quote any thing else from him as his Own, is an Imposition on the World, begun by some Men of Learning, and continued by Others of little or none.* This is the Sum of our Author's Observations; in which there is Part vulgar and impertinent, and Part false and his Own.

The Academic or Sceptic Philosophy! He might as well say, *The Popish or Lutheran Religion: the difference between Those being as wide as between These. A common Imposition of the World!* where, or by whom? Has not Cicero in his Disputations represented the Systemes of the several Sects, with more Clearness and Beauty than they themselves could do? Such Passages have been and will be
quoted,

quoted, out of *Cicero* indeed for the Elegancy of them; but not as his own Doctrines, but of the respective Sects, that there speak them. And what harm is this? The Reasoning is the same, from what quarter soever it comes; and the Authority not the less, though transfer'd from *Cicero* to a *Stoic*. But the *Men of Learning* have blunder'd, and not nicely distinguish'd *Cicero* from the *Stoic*. When he pleases to name those: I'll produce him a *Man of none*, * who has stupidly confounded *Cicero* with the *Epicurean*. And then his sagacious hint, *That Cicero's true Sentiments are to be seen in the Person of the Academic!* This he thought he was safe in; and yet it's as true, as it will appear strange, that His Sentiments are least or not at all to be seen there: of which as briefly as I can.

The *Platonic Academy* dogmatiz'd, or deliver'd their Doctrines for fix'd and certain, as the *Peripatetics* and *Stoics* did. But in the tract of Succession, one *Carneades*, a man of great wit and eloquence, on purpose to shew both, made an Innovation in the Academy. By the notion of *Fix'd and Certain* (*Fixa, Certa, Rata, Decreta*) he was pin'd down to one System; and his great Parts wanted more Room to expatiate and flourish in: he contriv'd therefore a way to get it: he denied the *Certainty of Things*, and admitted of no higher a Knowledge, than *Probability and Verisimilitude*. Not that he did not as much believe, and govern himself in common Life upon what he call'd *Highly Probables*, as the Others did upon their *Certains*: but by this pretty Fetch he obtain'd his End, and became Disputant Universal, *Pro omnibus sectis & contra omnes dicebat*. Did the *Stoics* assert a thing for Certain? He would demolish that Certainty from *Epicurean Topics*. Again, did

* Remark XLVIII.

These last pretend to any Certainty? He would unsay what he spoke for them before; and attack them with *Stoical* Arguments, which just now he had endeavor'd to baffle. This Method gave name to the *New Academy*; but it had few Professors while it lasted, and lasted but a little time: requiring such Wit and Eloquence, such laborious Study in all Sects whatever, and carrying in it's very face such an Air of Pride and Ostentation; that very Few either could or cared to espouse it.

However this very Sect, then deserted and almost forgot, did best agree with the vast Genius and ambitious Spirit of young *Cicero*. He was possess'd of Oratory in it's perfection: and he had added Philosophy under the best Masters of all Sects, *Diodotus*, *Antiochus*, *Philo*, *Posidonius*, and others: He would not confine himself to one System, but range through them all: so the *New Academy* was chosen, as the largest Field to shew his Learning and Eloquence. Which Turn when he had once taken, he was always to maintain: he was to rise no higher than *Probability*, the Characteristic of the Sect. For This was their Badge of Servitude, though they boasted of more Freedom, than the Others. Did a *Stoic* assert the *Certainty* of Divine Providence? You are tied down, says an *Academic*: it's only a *Probable*. You are tied as much, replies the *Stoic*; for though you believe it as firmly as I, you dare not say it's *Certain*, for fear of Clashing with your Sect.

If we take *Cicero* under this View, we shall then truly be qualified to interpret all his Writings. And first we shall find, what I said before, and which at once breaks to pieces our Writer's new Key, That the *Academic* Objections, which in his Philosophical Conferences are ever brought against the other Sects, is the most unlikely place where to find his real Sentiments.

timents. For that being the Privilege of the Sect, to speak *Pro* or *Con* as they pleas'd, * *Contra omnia dici oportere & pro omnibus*, † *Contra omnes Philosophos & pro omnibus dicere*; they very frequently oppos'd, ** *non ex animo sed simulate*, not heartily but feignedly; not what they really believ'd, but what serv'd the present turn. In *De Natura Deorum*, when *Balbus* the *Stoic* had spoken admirably for the Existence of the Gods and Providence, *Cotta* the *Academic* (though he was a Priest, one of the *Pontifices*) undertakes the opposite side, †† *non tam refellere ejus orationem, quam ea quae minus intellexit requirere*; not so much to refute his discourse, as to discuss some points he did not fully understand: and after he had finish'd his Attack with great copiousness and subtilty, yet in the close he owns to *Balbus*, ¶ *That what he had said, was for Dispute's sake, not his own Judgment; that he both desir'd that Balbus would confute him; and knew certainly that he could do it.* And *Cicero* himself, who was then auditor at the Dispute, though of the same Sect with *Cotta*, declares his own Opinion, *That the Stoic's Discourse for Providence seem'd to him more PROBABLE, than Cotta's against it*; which he repeats again in *De Devinatione* I, 5. And what now becomes of our Writer's *True method* and *Rule*? Whatsoever is spoken under the Person of an *Academic*, is that to be taken for *Cicero's* Sentiment? Why, *Cicero* declares here, that he sided with the *Stoic* against the *Academic*: and whom are we to believe, Himself or our silly Writer?

When *Cicero* says above, that the *Stoical* Doctrine of Providence seem'd to him more PROBABLE: if we take it aright, it carries the same importance as when a *Stoic* says it's CERTAIN and DEMONSTRABLE.

* Acad. II, 18. † Nat. Deor. I, 5. ** Nat. Deor. II, *fine*.
 †† Nat. Deor. III, 1. ¶ Nat. Deor. III, *fine*.

For, as I remark'd before, the Law, the Badge, the Characteristic of his *Seet* allow'd him to affirm no stronger than that: he durst not have spoken more peremptorily about a Proposition of *Euclid*, or what he saw with his own Eyes. His *Probable* had the same influence on his Belief, the same force on his Life and Conduct; as the Others *Certain* had on Theirs. Nay within his own Breast he thought it as much *Certain* as they: but he was to keep to the *Academic* Stile; which solely consisted in that Point, That nothing was allow'd *Certum, comprehensum, perceptum, ratum, firmum, fixum*; but our highest Attainment was *Probabile & Verisimile*. He that reads his works with penetration, judgment, and diligence, will find this to be true, That *Probable* in his *Seet* is equivalent to *Certain*. For what he says of *Socrates*, exactly fits himself; where reporting his last Words, *Whether it's better live or die, the Gods alone know; of Men I believe none knows*: As to what *Socrates* speaks, says he, that none but the Gods know, whether is better; *He himself KNOWS it; for he had said it before*: * *Sed suum illud, nihil ut affirmet, tenet ad extremum*: but he keeps his *Manner* to the last, to affirm nothing for CERTAIN.

If we seek therefore for *Cicero's* true Sentiments; it must not be in his Disputes against Others, where he had licence to say any thing for opposition sake: but in the Books where he dogmatizes himself; where allowing for the word *Probable*, you have all the Spirit and Marrow of the *Platonic, Peripatetic, and Stoic* Systemes; I mean his Books *De Officiis, Tusculanae, De Amicitia, De Senectute, De Legibus*; in which, and in the Remains of others now lost, he declares for the Being and Providence of God, for the Immortality of the Soul, for every Point that ap-

* *Tuscul. I, 42.*

proaches to Christianity. Those Three Sects he esteems, as the sole Ornaments of Philosophy; the Others he contemns: and the *Epicureans* he lashes throughout; not only for their base and abject Principles, but for their neglect of all Letters, Eloquence, and Science. And I must do him this Justice: that as his *Sect* allow'd him to chuse what he lik'd best, and what he valued as most *Probable*, out of all the various Systemes; he always chuses like a knowing and honest Man. If in any point of Moral, one Author had spoken nobler and loftier than another; he is sure to adopt the worthiest Notion for his Own, and to cloth it in a finer Dress with new beauties of Stile.

These Animadversions of Dr. Bentley on Mr Collins's Discourse, go no further than C. 140 Pa: If he proceeded further afterwards, they would, Doubtless, be worth Perusing.

T A N T U M.

E R R A T A.

P. 13. l. 11. *two* read *too*. P. 72. l. 13. *Copies* read *Copiers*.

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times to the present period.
By John G. Groverman.
Cambridge, 1791.

2. The History of the County of
Cambridge, from the earliest
times to the present period.
By John G. Groverman.
Cambridge, 1791.

3. The History of the County of
Cambridge, from the earliest
times to the present period.
By John G. Groverman.
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4. The History of the County of
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By John G. Groverman.
Cambridge, 1791.

REMARKS

Upon a late

DISCOURSE

OF

FREE-THINKING:

IN A

LETTER to F. H. D.D.

BY

Bentley

PHILELEUTHERUS LIPSIENSIS.

Perlegi Feb. 49. Part the first

*Est genus hominum, qui esse primos se omnium rerum
volunt,*

Nec sunt. —

— An audes

*Personam formare novam? Servetur ad imum
Qualis ab incepto processerit, & sibi constet.*

L O N D O N:

Printed for JOHN MORPHEW,

MDCCXIII.

UPON A LINE
DISCOURSE
ON
FREE-THINKING

To my very Learned and Honour'd

FRIEND F. H. D. D.

At LONDON,

GREAT-BRITAIN.

S I R,

YOUR many and great Civilities to me since our first acquaintance in the *Low-Countries*, and the kind office you then did me in conveying my Annotations on MENANDER to the Press, but above all your Taciturnity and Secrefy, that have kept the true Author of that Book undiscover'd hitherto, if not unguess'd; have encourag'd me to send you these present REMARKS, to be communicated to the Public, if you think they deserve it: in which I doubt not but you'll exhibit a new proof of your wonted Friendship and Fidelity.

What occasion'd you this trouble, was the fresh arrival of a Country-man of ours from Your Happy Island; who brought along with him a small Book, just publish'd before he left *London*; which (as he says) made very much Discourse there. He knowing me to be a great admirer of the Books of your Nation, and to have competently learn'd both to write and speak your Language during my long stay at *Oxford*, made me a then agreeable Present of that new *Discourse of Free-thinking*.

I, who (as you well know) have been train'd up and exercis'd in *Free Thought* from my Youth, and whose borrow'd Name PHILLELEUTHERUS sufficiently denotes me a *Lover of Freedom*, was pleas'd not a little at so promising a Title: and (to confess to you my own vanity) could not help some aspiring Thoughts from pressing and intruding on me, That this *Rising and Growing Society* might one day perhaps admit into their Roll a humble Foreigner Brother, a *Free-thinker of Leipsic*.

But when once the Curtain was drawn, and by a perusal of the Book the private Cabbala and mysterious Scheme within became visible and open; that Expectation and the Desire it self immediately vanish'd. For under the specious show of *Free-thinking*, a *Set and System of Opinions* are all along inculcated and dogmatically taught; *Opinions* the most slavish, the most abject and base, that Human Nature is capable of. And upon those terms, neither you, I fancy, nor I, shall ever make our Court for admittance into their Club.

*Room on wth
paper must
be silly, I
should think*

This irksome disappointment, that my fine Present should dwindle so far, as to be below the value of wast Paper, rais'd a hasty Resolution in me to write some Remarks on it. And I find I shall have much the same Employment, as I had before on *Menander*. For I am here too to deal in *Fragments*: the main of the Book, being a Rhapsody of Passages out of Old and New Writers, rak'd and scrap'd together by the joint labour of many hands, to abuse all Religion. O *infelices laborum*! Had I been at their Consultation, I could have furnish'd them with many more: and I will now inform them, that if they will read all *Galen*, and the *Greek Commentators* on *Aristotle*, they may find two or three

Paf.

Passages, much fitter for their purpose, than any they have brought.

As for the Gatherings out of your *English* Authors, most of which are modern, and many still alive; I know you will not expect from me that I, *(an English man)* should examin those Citations. The Books are not to be found in *Leipsic*, having not yet passed the Seas to Us: the Writers are but private men, and even *(the Bishop)* Your Church is not answerable, for what they say: *(ops)* or print: not to add that I, by Birth and Education a *Lutheran*, am not concern'd in any particular *(an English man)* Doctrines of your Church, which affect not Christianity in common. However, if our *Free-thinker* has shown no more Ability nor Sincerity, where he alledges the *English* Writers, than where *Latin* or *Greek*; he will soon have a just Answer by some of your own Divines.

I should now enter upon my Remarks, but that I am first to excuse my self, why I give you not the Stile of Honour, customary in *England*, I mean, the Title of REVEREND. The Author indeed has made me sick of it, by his flat insipid Drollery in tacking it to every Name he mentions, six times together perhaps within a few lines. Can this now pass for Wit among you? Is this reckon'd good Breeding or Urbanity? What's become of the old *English* Taste and Finesse? Who may not be witty at this cheap rate, if he dares but be impudently dull? Give a loose to such vulgar fordid Rallery, and the very best of Quality, even Royalty it self, even *ipsa sua sacra Caesarea Majestas* may be abus'd by its own Title with an affected and sneering rehearsal of it. Yet this may be born with however, and is therefore pardonable, because it's contemptible: but when Buffoonery grows up to Impiety, and dully profanes the most adorable Names,

Holy

Holy Apostles, Blessed Saviour, Ever blessed Trinity,
 by a fulsom Repetition or a blasphemous Irony; I
 must own to you I want *English* words to express
 my just Sentiment. May the Man grow wittier and
 wiser, by finding this Stuff will not take nor please:
 and, since by a little smattering in Learning and great
 Conceitedness of himself, he has lost his Religion:
 may he find it again by harder study, and a hum-
 bler mind. For the misery of it is, He that goes
 a Fool into Atheism, (as all are that now go) must
 come out of it like a Fool too (if ever he comes)
 unless he acquires ten times the Knowledge, that's ne-
 cessary for a common Christian. *(Who need not
 know much, provided he believes much!)*

RE-

REMARKS.

I.

QUOD dedit principium adveniens? was said of *Thraso* in the Comedy. And our Author, to give us as good a taste of his Sufficiency, sets out with this Sentence in his very Dedication. * *As none, says he, but artificial designing Men, or crack-brain'd Enthusiasts, presume to be Guides to others in matters of Speculation; so none, who think they ought to be guided in those matters, make choice of any but such for their Guides.* Now besides the falseness of the Propositions, here is a small figure in Rhetoric, call'd Nonsense, in the very turn of this Sentence. For if *None* but designing and crackbrain'd Men pre-sume to be Guides to others; those *others*, that make use of Guides, must needs have Them and no other. Where then is the *Choice*? Or what power is there of *chusing*, when there's no room for comparison, or preference? As *none*, says he, but Priests presume to be Guides, so none make *choice* of any other Guides but Priests. As no member of the body presumes to see but the *Eye*, so no Man makes *choice* of any other Member to see with, but the *Eye*. Is not here now an admirable Period, with exact propriety of word and thought? *But they who like not Presumes, say, think for on self*

But to pardon the false connexion of his *As* and his *So*; pray, what are we to understand here by *Matters of Speculation*? Why all Speculation without exception, every branch of *Mathematics*, and all *Science*

whatever: for there is not one word ^{except Enthusiasm} preceding, that restrains the sense to *Speculations in Theology*. So that by this Man's reasoning, we are to say thus: No Man must take *Euclid* or *Archimedes*, Our *Leibnitz*, or Your *Newton*, or any one else dead or living, for his Guide in Speculation. They were *designing Men* or else *crackbrain'd Enthusiasts*, when they presum'd to write Mathematics, and become Guides to others. As for our Author, though he owns * *all Arts and Sciences* must be known, to know any *One* thoroughly; that not *one* of them can be omitted, if you pretend to be a judge in *one single Book, the Bible*, 'tis so very *miscellaneous*; yet, if you will believe him, he renounces all Guides, and is his own Master self-taught. He's a great Astronomer without *Tycho* or *Kepler*, and an Architect without *Vitruvius*. He walk'd alone in his Infancy, and was never led in hanging-sleeves. And yet this mighty Pretender has not broach'd one Doctrine in all his Book, which he has not borrow'd from Others, and which has not been dictated by blind Guides many Ages ago.

But we'll indulge the Man a little more, and suppose he did not mean *Speculations* at large, but only in matters of Religion. And then the Sentence will run thus; *That none else presume to be Guides to others in speculative Points of Religion, but either artificial designing Men, or crackbrain'd Enthusiasts*. Now the Man is in his true colours; and though he blunder'd in the Expression, this was the Thought he endeavor'd at. And by this we must infer, That *Erasmus*, *Grotius*, *Bochart*, and other great Men, that have wrote Commentaries on the Bible, and presum'd to be Guides to others, were either *crackbrain'd Fools* or *designing Knaves*. Nay this Author's beloved, *Monsieur le Clerc*, must come in too for the hard choice.

* Pag. 9, 10, 11.

of one of these Epithets. And yet, what is strange, these very Men with more of your own Nation, the *Chillingworths*, the *Spencers*, the *Cudworths*, the *Tillotsons*, are honour'd in other parts of his Book, and recommended as *Free-thinkers*. What Inconsistence is this, what Contradiction? No matter for that: That's a necessary ingredient in his Scheme and his Writings: *Huic aliter non fit, Avite, liber*. What he here prescribes to others, we must take for his own Method: He defies all Guides and Interpreters; he disclaims all assistance; he'll decide upon all points *freely* and *supinely* by himself; without Furniture, without proper Materials. And, to speak *freely*, one would guess by his crude Performance, that he's as good as his word. (*you'r an arch knave!*)

II.

In the close of his Dedication he says thus: * *It is therefore without the least hopes of doing any good, but purely to comply with your request, that I send you this Apology for Free-thinking*. If I am not mistaken, as I may be about a foreign Language, That expression of *Doing any good* is capable of two senses: either of which I shall easily concede to the Author. If he means, *he had not the least hopes of doing any good*, that is, of doing any good Service, real Benefit, true Advantage to any one by his Book; I am afraid, that sense was true in his *Intention*. Or, if he despair'd of *doing any good*, that is, of having any Effect and Success in making Converts by his Book; I question not, but That too will be true in the *Event*.

But though here in the *Epistle* he quite despairs, *without the least hopes of doing good*; yet in the *Epi-*

* Pag. 4.

logue he's a little more sanguin. For there he speaks of an *Endeavour to do good*, which very Endeavour has no place without some degree of Hope. He advises there his Patron, to conceal the Name of his *Esquireships*, if he commits the Book to the Press. * *For*, says he, *I think it Virtue enough to endeavour to do good, only within the bounds of doing your self no harm.* Now this is true Atheistical Moral: do good no further, than you are sure not to lose by it; keep your dear Person and Interest out of *harm's* way. But the Christian Institution suppli'd him once with nobler Sentiments: in the practise of which the Holy *Apostles* and *Martyrs* voluntarily laid down their Lives; a very odd sort of *Priestcraft*. Nay the Heathen Philosophy would have taught him more elevated Thoughts; if he had not chosen for his *Guide* (however he rails at all *Guides*) the worst Sect of all.

III.

† *By Free-thinking*, says he, *I mean, The use of the Understanding, in endeavouring to find out the meaning of any Proposition whatsoever, in considering the nature of the Evidence for or against it, and in judging of it according to the seeming force or weakness of the Evidence.* Now we'll allow him, what he desires, that his Definition is *extensive* enough; for it comprehends the whole herd of Human Race, even Fools, Madmen, and Children; for they use what Understanding they have; and judge as things seem; he has *extended* it so artfully and with Logical Justness, that in a Definition of FREE Thinking there is not a Syllable about *Freedom*. 'Tis really no more, than

Enough, Think and Judge as you find; which every Inhabitant

* *Pag.* 178. † *Pag.* 5.

of *Bedlam* practises every day, as much as any of our illustrious Sect. *of Modern Sdants.*

But perhaps, I am mistaken; and the Notion of *Freedom* supperadded to *Thinking* may be implied in those two Pronouns, *Any whatsoever*. And then indeed the soberer part of Mankind, who judge for themselves no further than their Education has fitted them, are wholly excluded; and the *Crack-brain'd* and *Bedlamites* are taken in. *Oliver's* Porter, as I have been told, would determin daily *de omni scibili*; and if he had now been alive, might have had the first Chair in this Club. For a modern *Free-thinker* is an Universalist in Speculation; *any* Proposition *whatsoever* he's ready to decide; *every day* * *de quolibet ente*, as our Author here professes; Self Assurance supplies all want of Abilities; he'll interpret (as you'll see presently) the *Prophets* and *Solomon* without *Hebrew*, *Plutarch* and *Zosimus* without *Greek*, and *Cicero* and *Lucan* without *Latin*. *Don't Lye!*

The Characteristic of this Sect does not lie at all in the Definition of *Thinking*, but in stating the true meaning of their adjective *FREE*. Which in fact will be found to carry much the same Notion, as *Bold*, *Rash*, *Arrogant*, *Presumptuous*, together with a strong Propension to the *Paradox* and the *Perverse*. For *Free* with them has no relation at all to outward Impediment or Inhibition (which they neither do nor can complain of, not with you in *England* I am sure) but means an inward Promptness and Forwardness to decide about Matters beyond the reach of their Studies, in *opposition* to the rest of Mankind. There is nothing plainer through his whole Book, than that He himself makes Singularity, Whim, and Contradiction to be the specific Difference, and an Essential part in the Composition of a

Why Gay?

Free-thinker. If *Origen, Erasmus, Grotius, &c.* chance to have any *Nosstrum* against the Current of common Doctrine, they are presently of his Party, and he dubbs them *Free-thinkers*; in all the rest of their Writings where they fall in with the common Opinions; they are discharg'd by him with Ignominy; *Whore?* even proscrib'd as *Unthinkers, Half-thinkers, and Enemies to Free-thinking.* Why this unequal Usage, unless he thinks *Freedom of Thought* to be then only exercis'd, when it dissents and opposes? Has not the World for so many Ages thought and judg'd *freely* on *Euclid*, and yet has assented to all his Propositions? *Demonstracion* Is it not possible, to have us'd the like *freedom*, and yet close in with the Apostle's Creed, Our Confession, or Your Articles? Surely I think as *freely*, when I conclude my Soul is Immaterial; as the Author does, when he affirms His to be made of the same Materials, with that of a Swine.

Another Idea couch'd in their adjective *FREE*, is Jealousy, Mistrust, and Surmise. 'Tis a firm persuasion among them, That there are but two sorts in Mankind, Deceivers and Deceiv'd, Cheats and Fools. Hence it is, that dreaming and waking they have one perpetual Theme, *Priestcraft*. This is just like the opinion of *Nero*, † *who believ'd for certain, that every man was guilty of the same Impurities that He was; only some were craftier than others to dissemble and conceal it.* And the Surmise in both Cases must proceed from the same Cause; either a very corrupt Heart, or a crazy and crackbrain'd Head, or, as it often happens, Both.

† *Suet. Ner. c. 29.* Ex nonnullis comperi, persuasissimum habuisse eum, neminem hominum pudicum, aut ulla corporis parte purum esse; verum plerosque dissimulare vitium, & calliditate obtegere.

IV.

* *This Definition cannot, he conceives, be excepted against by the Enemies of Free-Thinking, as not including the Crime with which they charge Free-Thinkers in order to render them odious to Unthinking People.* His Definition, as we have seen, includes nothing at all in it, besides *Thinking* and *Judging*; there's nothing in it to describe *Free*, which he left us to supply: and as we find in the whole tenour of his Book, That word does really include not one *Crime* only, but many. Take the general Definition exclusive of the *Crime*, and compare it with the Title of his Book, and the latter will be found either flat Nonsense in it self, or a Contradiction to the whole. *This Discourse*, says the Title, *was occasion'd by the Rise and Growth of a Sect call'd Free-thinkers.* Why then it had the stalest occasion that ever poor Discourse had: for the *Rise* of that *Sect* (if the general Definition constitutes it) is as early as the Creation of *Adam*; or (in his Scheme, who hints his willingness to believe * *Men before Adam*) even much earlier than that. Nay, if we may guess at his Creed from his Poet *Manilius* †, the *Sect* must have *risen* without any *Rise*, and have its *growth* from all *Eternity*. For when ever the Species of Man existed, 'tis most certain, there must have been *Free-thinkers*, as far as this *Definition* goes. They began at once with the *Free-Breathers*, the *Free-Hearers*, and the *Free-Smellers*; and are every whit as numerous and populous, as those are.

Again, pray consider the words, a SECT of *Free-thinkers*; that is, a Rope of Sand; a Sum of Cy-

* Pag. 5. * Pag. 160. † Pag. 151.

phers; a Commonwealth of Savages, where no body governs nor no body obeys,

Νομάδες, ἀλλὰ δ' ἐδὲν ἐδὲς ἐδὲνός.

SECT, *Secta* or *Disciplina*, is a Company of Persons agreeing in the same System of Opinions and Doctrins; the words have their derivation a *sectando* & *discendo*, from following and learning; as the Platonic Sect follow'd the Doctrine of Plato, the Peripatetic of Aristotle. Now a modern *Free-thinker*, that professes he will neither follow nor learn, that renounces all Guides and Teachers, as either Crackbrain'd or Cheats; how can this unfociable Animal be ever of a Sect? 'tis a contradiction in Terms, and a thorow piece of Nonsense. (*& this a poor Pedantic Remark*)

But surely the Author had some meaning, when he gave that Title to his Book. No doubt of it, and the Book it self explains it. For under all this pretense to *Free-thinking*, He and his Friends have a Set of Principles and *Dogmata*, to which He that will not Assent and Consent (I cannot say Oath and Subscription are requir'd) shall be excluded the Sect. That the Soul is material and mortal, Christianity an imposture, the Scriptures a forgery, the Worship of God superstition, Hell a fable, and Heaven a dream, our Life without providence, and our Death without hope like that of Asses and Dogs, are parts of the glorious Gospel of these truly * *Idiot Evangelists*. If all your *Free-thinking* does not centre in these Opinions, you shall be none of their Family. Claim your Right as long as you will upon the terms of the *Definition*; plead, that you have thought freely, impartially, and carefully upon all those Propositions, and that in all of them the force of Evidence has drawn you to the contrary side; protest against this foul play, that while they clamour a-

bout *Free-thinking*, they themselves impose Creeds and terms of Communion; that the Author, while he rails at all *Guides*, obtrudes himself as a *Guide* to others; all this shall avail you nothing, you shall never be incorporated into the *rising and growing Sect*, till you own that That's the only *Free-thinking*, to *think* just as They do.

V.

He now proceeds by Five Arguments to prove every Man's Right to *Free-thinking*, according to that *Definition*: a very needless and useless labour: for no Religion, nor Sect, not the very Papists, deny it. 'Tis as necessary to the Rational Mind, as Respiration is to the Vital Body. Without this all Religions that were, are, or may be, are equally commendable. Christianity it self depended on it at its first propagation: the Reformation was grounded upon it, and is maintain'd and supported upon the same bottom. We shall leave therefore his Five Arguments, to prove what none deny; only make some *Remarks* upon his Ignorance and Unfairness in several Incidents, that he has slid in by the By.

* He runs a parallel between *Free-thinking* and *Free-painting*; which latter he laments is not more cultivated in *Great-Britain*; and can never be brought to *perfection* there, unless *suitable Encouragements* be given to *Free-painters*, so as *numbers of Men and many Hands* may be employ'd and encourag'd. Now here is a pretty broad and palpable insinuation, that by changing the terms of the parallel is to hint to the Public, that a *suitable encouragement* should be given to *Free-thinkers*; so that more Hands and Heads may be invited to so meritorious a Work. I could

* Pag. 7.

scarce have believ'd, he would have shown himself so soon. What, already offering at Stipends and Salaries and Benefices for his Sect? He more than once in his Book, grudges the great charge the Public is at, in providing for so many *Priests*. And what gainer would the Public be, if it turn'd out the *Christian Priests*, and with an equal or greater charge maintain'd *Atheist Preachers*? For really that would be the Case, and the Man has reason to put in for Salaries sometimes. For whenever Atheism should be general and establish'd, then even *Christianity* would become *Free-thinking*. And, if provision was not settled for Parochial Lectures every week, the People would be apt to relapse again from the new National Church. So that all that the Public would save by the bargain, is to change the Persons not the Expense; and instead of the present possessors of the Pulpit, to have an equal number of *Reverend* and *Right Reverend* and *Most Reverend* Preachers of Atheism.

VI.

He affirms, That * *Time, Labour and Numbers of hands* are necessary to bring *Thinking* in any Science whatever to tolerable perfection: the first Notions will be rude and imperfect; Time and Maturity are requir'd towards any degree of Justness. Now since the Sect of *Free-thinkers* by his own account is but now *rising and growing*, and the *Era* of it is plac'd no earlier, than Your late *Revolution*; You may take his own argument and word for it, That the *Thoughts* in this Discourse of his for want of due Maturation are all crude and undigested. And really without his Indication, αὐτὸ δείξει, the Thing it self will speak so, before I've done with

his Book. But however, in the next Generation, when more Progress is made in *Thinking*, and more Numbers are come in; he seems to promise, they will write better.

* *All Sciences and Arts*, says he, *have a mutual Relation, Harmony, Dependency, and Connexion; and the just Knowledge of any One cannot be acquir'd without the Knowledge of all the Rest.* Weigh now this man's Abilities in his own Scale. He declares he judges every day *de quolibet ente*; and yet to every single *Quodlibet*, he acknowledges as necessary the whole Circle of Sciences. A very *Hudibras* in perfection; no Nut is too hard for his Teeth:

Nil intra est olea, nihil extra est in nuce duri.

And yet this Great Promiser with all the assistance of his Club perpetually bewrays a profound ignorance in all Science, in all Antiquity, and in the very Languages it is convey'd in.

VII.

Homer's ILIAD he admires, † *as the Epitome of all Arts and Sciences.* And by This now, one would guess, he had read it in the Original. Be it so: and when he hears, there's an *Odysseis* of *Homer*, he will read and admire that too. Well, where are the footsteps of this vast Knowledge in *Homer*? Why for instance, says he, *he could never have describ'd, in the manner he has done, a Chariot or a Chariot-wheel without the particular knowledge of a Coach-maker; such knowledge being absolutely necessary to that description.* Here's your justness of Thought. What, nothing less than a Coach-Maker's knowledge? Would not a Coach-Man's have serv'd the turn? At this rate our Friend *Homer* (as poor and blind as some

* Pag. 8, 9. † Pag. 9.

have thought him) was the ablest *Jack of all Trades*, that ever was in nature. *Hippias* the *Elean*, who preach'd and blazon'd his Arts at the Olympic Games, That all his Habit from head to foot and every Utensil for his house was made with his own hands, was an *Idiot Evangelist* to him. For by the same rule, when *Homer* describes a Ship under sail; he had the particular Knowledge both of a *Ship-Carpenter* and a *Pilot*: when he describes the well-booted *Greeks* and several sorts of *Shields* and *Sandals*, he had the particular knowledge of *Tychius*, *στυτοτόμων ὅχ' ἄλυστος*, the very Prince of all Shoemakers. And yet I am apt to fancy, if our Author had no better an Artist than the old Poet for his Shoos, he would be as sorry a *Free-walker*, as he is now a *Free-thinker*.

To prove *Homer's* universal Knowledge *a priori*, our Author says, * *He design'd his Poem for Eternity, to please and instruct Mankind*. Admirable again. *Eternity* and *Mankind*, nothing less than all Ages and all Nations, were in the Poet's foresight. Though our Author vouches that he *thinks every day de quolibet ente*; give me leave to except *Homer*: for he never seems to have thought of Him or his History. Take my word for it, poor *Homer* in those Circumstances and early times had never such aspiring thoughts. He wrote a sequel of Songs and Rhapsodies, to be sung by himself for small earnings and good cheer, at Festivals and other days of Merriment; the *Ilias* he made for the Men, and the *Odyssæis* for the other Sex. These loose Songs were not collected together in the form of an Epic Poem, till *Pisistratus's* time about 500 years after. Nor is there one word in *Homer*, that presages or promises Immortality to his work; as we find there is in the later Poets, *Virgil*, *Horace*, *Ovid*, *Lucan*, and *Statius*. He no more thought

* *Pag. 9.*

at that time, that his *Poems* would be *immortal*, than our *Free-thinkers* now believe their *Souls* will; and the proof of each will be only *a parte post*; in the Event, but not in the Expectation.

VIII.

* *The BIBLE*, says he, *is the most miscellaneous book in the world, and treats of the greatest Variety of things; Creation, Deluge, Chronology, Civil Laws, Ecclesiastical Institutions, Nature, Miracles, Buildings, Husbandry, Sailing, Physics, Pharmacy, Mathematics, Metaphysics, and Morals.* Agreed; and what is his Inference from this? Why *Free thinking* is therefore necessary: for to *understand the matter of this Book, and to be Master of the whole, a man must be able to think justly in every Science and Art.* Very true! and yet All he has here said of his Sciences is requisite, were Your *English Bible* suppos'd to be the very Original. Add therefore to all the Requisites here enumerated, a sufficient Skill in the *Hebrew and Greek Languages.* Now pass your verdict on the man from his own evidence and confession. *To understand the Bible*, says he, *requires all Sciences; and two Languages besides, say I.* But it's plain from his Book, that he has already condemn'd the whole Bible for a Forgery and Imposture. Did he do it without *understanding the matter* of it? That's too scandalous for him to own. We must take it then, that he professes himself accomplish'd in all *Sciences and Arts* according to his own rule.

Quid tulit hic tanto dignum promissor hiatu?

Where has He or any of his Sect shown any tolerable Skill in *Science*? What Dark passages of *Scripture* have they clear'd, or of any Book whatever?

* Pag. 10, 11.

Nay to remit to him his *Sciences* and *Arts*, what have they done in the *Languages*, the shell and surface of *Scripture*? A great *Master of the whole Bible* indeed: that can scarce step three lines in the easiest *Classic Author*, produc'd by Himself, without a notorious blunder.

IX.

* *Among the absurdities that follow from not Thinking Freely*, he mentions that of the *Pagans*, who (he says) *suppos'd GOD to be like an Ox or a Cat or a Plant*. Our Author means the *Aegyptians*; and its plain here from the next clause, that he puts GOD under the present *Idea* and known *Attributes* of that Name, as Christians now conceive it. A rare judge in Antiquity, and fit to decide about *Scripture*. The Matter is no more than this. The *Aegyptians*, who chiefly liv'd upon Husbandry, declar'd by Law, that all those Animals, which were useful to Agriculture or destroyers of Vermin, should be *holy, sacred, and inviolable*; so that it was Death to kill any of them † either design'dly or by chance. These they consider'd, as instruments of Divine Providence towards the support of human Life: †† and without that View they consecrated none. So that it was only a Civil and Political Worship, in the Legislators; and had very little of Sacred even among the Vulgar. This is plain from what ¶ *Diodorus* says, *That they paid the same honours to them, when Dead, as when alive*. But our Author's Conception here is really

* Pag. 13.

† *Herodotus* in *Euterpe*.

†† *Cicero de Nat. Deor.* I. *Aegyptii nullum beluam, nisi ob aliquam utilitatem quam ex ea caperent, consecraverunt.*

¶ *Diod. lib. I.* Σέβονται ἐν αἷ τῷ ζῶντι Αἰγύπτιοι, ἐξ ὧντα μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τελευτήσαντα.

so *absurd* and so monstrous, that the filiest Pagan in all *Aegypt* would have been asham'd of him. For according to his notion and the present meaning of the word GOD, they declar'd it Death by Law to *kill* an *immortal* and *omnipotent* Cat: and decreed divine Honours to it, after its *Immortality* and Deity was *dead*. When *Thinking* is by longer time come to some perfection in the Sect; they will learn perhaps, that the Objects of worship in *Paganism* and *Polytheism* had not all the Attributes, nay generally not *one* of them, that we now by advances in Science and Thought justly ascribe to God: and they may have the pleasure of insulting several of the Clergy, that have wrong stated the notion of Heathen Idolatry. In the mean time I'll recommend to him one Thought, when he's dispos'd to *think de quolibet ente*; What divine Attributes the *Aegyptians* thought of, when they worship'd, as good Authors assure us, *Crepitum ventris*.

X.

But the most antient Fathers of the Church were as bad as his *Aegyptians*: *for *They*, says he, *no less absurdly suppos'd GOD to be material*. And you are to *suppose*, he's a Droll here, when he says *no less absurdly*; for if I wholly mistake not the Cabbala of his Sect, He himself *supposes* either GOD to be *ma-* 9.
terial, or not to be at all. With a few of the Fathers the matter stands thus: They believ'd the Attributes of God, his Infinite Power, Wisdom, Justice and Goodness, in the same extent as we do: but his Essence (no more than we can now) they could not discover. The Scriptures, they saw, call'd him *Spiritus*, *Spirit*; and the Human Soul *Anima*,

* Pag. 13.

Breath: both which in their primitive Sense mean *Aerial Matter*: and all the Words that *Hebrew, Greek* and *Latin* of Old, or any Tongue now or hereafter can supply, to denote the substance of *God* or *Soul*, must either be thus Metaphorical, or else merely Negative, as *Incorporeal*, or *Immaterial*. This, when he is in a mood for *Thinking*, he will find to be necessary *à priori*, for want of *Ideas*. What wonder then, if in those early times (for he knows, * *its by gradual progress in Thinking that Men arrive at full knowledge*) some Fathers believ'd that the Divine substance was *Matter*, or *Body*: especially while the very notion of *Body* was undefined and unfixed, and was as extensive as *Thing*? Was this such a shame in a few Fathers; while the *Stoics*, not a *rising and growing*, but a *flourishing* Sect at that time, maintain'd *Qualities* and *Passions*, *Virtues* and *Vices*, *Arts* and *Sciences*, nay *Syllogisms* and *Soloeicisms* to be *Bodies*? But the real Shame is, that in these brighter days of Knowledge, when *Matter* and *Motion* have been thorowly consider'd, and all the powers of *Mechanism* discuss'd and stated; our Author and his Sect should still contend both in Discourse and in Print, *That their Souls are Material*. This they do with such Zeal, as if they should be great gainers by the Victory. And by my consent, lets close with them upon the debate. Let them put a previous Question, Whether there are in Mankind different Species of Souls? Let this once pass in the Affirmative; and Their Souls shall be allow'd as Corporeal and Brutal, as their Opinions, Writings, and Lives seem to represent them.

* Pag. 8.

XI.

His next Effort is a retail of some Popish Doctrins and Rites, * *Infallibility, Image-Worship, and Relicks*, which Our Church and Yours have long ago rejected. What's this then to the purpose, or what plea to the present *Free-thinkers* in England? Nay he owns, we are now rid of these Absurdities, and by whose labour and cost. They obtain'd, says he, almost universally, † *till the Thinking of a few, some whereof sacrificed their Lives by so doing, gave a new Turn to the Christian World.* This is manifestly meant of the first Reformers, and particularly those of England, who for freedom of Thinking laid down their Lives,

Atque animas pulchra pro libertate dederunt.

'Twas by the price and purchase of Their Blood, that this Author and his Sect have at this day, not only the Liberty, but the Power, Means, and Method of Thinking. For together with Religion, all Arts and Sciences then rais'd up their heads; and both were brought about by the same Persons. And yet this very honest and grateful Sect involves those very *Priests*, to whom they're indebted for all things, in the common Crime with those that murder'd them; nay with *Talapoins, Bonzes, Pawawvers*, and who not;

For Priests of all Religions are the same.

But some of the *Fathers* again displease him; for they were too severe and rigorous for Men of his Genius; they disallow'd * *Self Defense, Second Marriages, and Usury.* An Error sure on the right hand, which shews they had not the † *Priestcraft* of Pope *Pius* the Fifth. And yet here with his usual Accu-

* Pag. 13. † Pag. 14. * Pag. 14. † Pag. 117.

racy,

racy, he lays those things wide and in common, which were press'd upon the Clergy only, but in the Laity conniv'd at. It is a Crime too in the Fathers, that * *Antipodes* were not sooner demonstrated, nor the *Earth's Motion about the Sun*. Very well: but pray who were the persons, that gave new light in these matters? All hearty professors and practisers of Religion, and among them several *Priests*. All these things were discover'd and perfected, before this new Club had its *Rise*: nor is there the least Branch of Science, that any of their Members either invented or improv'd. *S'. Is. Newton was at least an Improver.*

XII.

* But now we have him for Ten pages together with Image and Allegory; *Free-seeing* is substituted for *Free-thinking*, and a *Confession of Eye-sight Faith* for a *Christian Creed*; and then in a tedious parallel the several juggles of *Hocus Pocus* make the Emblem of *Priestcraft*. Argument in all this you are to expect none, there's no occasion for that: for Illustration, Similitude, Comparison, especially when turn'd to Ridicule and distorted into Farce, do the business much better; and (as I have been told) work Wonders for the *growing Sect*, and make Converts to admiration.

SUPPOSE, says he, a Set of Men should fancy it was absolutely necessary to the peace of Society, or to some other great purpose, to hinder and prevent *Free-seeing*, and to impose a Creed and Confession and Standard of *Eye-sight Faith*. These Men, says he, must either be Madmen or designing Knaves: and what methods would they take? They would draw Articles in flat contradiction to plain *Sight*;

require Subscription, and forbid Opposition to them; explain, paraphrase, and comment upon them; settle Pensions and Salaries for those that preach and propagate them; traduce, punish, and persecute to the utmost all that disagree to them.

Now under this Image you are to understand *Christianity*, and all *Religion* whatever: for our Author is playing *Hocus Pocus* in the very Similitude he takes from that Juggler, and would slip upon you (as He phrases it) a *Counter* for a *Groat*. The true meaning of it is this: SUPPOSE, that *Religion* was first contriv'd, either by the *Priesthood* for *Lucre*, or by the *Magistrate* for *easy Government*. Why truly, if we SUPPOSE it to be a *Sham*, we do suppose it a *Sham*. A wonderful argument, and a mighty advance. Does he detain us in so many nauseating Pages, and all along beg the Question? A most formidable man this, for Thought and Demonstration.

XIII.

Well but he'll shew Instances of Religious Juggle, in the * *Oracular Temples or Churches of the Pagans*. Pray mind the emphatic Words, *or Churches*, and admire the Author's penetration and discretion, For without that prudent explication, *Temples* perhaps in Your Language might have been misunderstood, and mistaken for *Inns of Court*. These Temples, he says, were contriv'd with many Caverns and Holes to produce fearful Noises, and furnish'd with Machines for the Priests to act their parts in. And pray, who taught him all this? Is it not chiefly, and almost solely, to be learnt from the *Christian Fathers*? Does not he own, † that the *Chri-*

* Pag. 19. † Pag. 20. He had it out of Lucian's Alexander.
 * Εξ ὧν Ἐμπεδοκλῆς, ἔξω Χριστιανῶν.

stians as well as *Epicureans* were chas'd away by those Priests, before they would pronounce any Oracles? And yet thorow this whole Book, by a worse trick than *Hocus Pocus*, the *Christians* are charg'd with the very Frauds, that They either only or chiefly have discover'd.

But now a Specimen of his Learning again, which he sprinkles by the way. * *It was universally believ'd*, says he, *among ordinary people, That the Gods themselves came down from Heaven, and eat of the repasts, which the Priests prepar'd for them at the peoples Expence*: And again in the next Page, *That the Gods came down to eat upon Earth*. Now did not I guess right, that for all his fine Panegyric upon the † *Ilias* of *Homer*, he was little or not at all acquainted with that Poem? For if he were, he would have learnt from thence, that in the Heathen Notion the Gods could not eat upon Earth, nor devour human Repasts:

* Οὐ γὰρ σῖτον ἔδυσ', εἰ πίνουσ' αἰθοπα οἶνον,
Τένεκ' ἀναίμονές εἰσι, καὶ ἀθάνατοι καλέοντο).

Whence therefore had our Learned Author this bold assertion of *universal belief*? Even from *Bel and the Dragon*: and what *his Mother* once taught him there, he ascribes to Paganism in common. The real matter is no more than this. When a Heathen Priest slew a Victim, he had no more of it for his share than Law and Custom allow'd, scarce worth the labour of Butchering: the Entrails and most useless Parts were burnt on the Altar, and the best of the Victim was carried home to the Sacrificer's house, to be feasted on by his Family and Friends: and if the Priest was invited too as a Guest, it was a Work of Supererogation. Nor did the most credulous be-

* Pag. 19.

† Pag. 9.

* *Iliad.* s. v. 347.

lieve, that Gods came down and devour'd *Flesh*; nor was any such *Repast* set apart for Them. If any *Viſuals* was ſo ſet, either in Temples or the open Streets; it was well known, that the Sweepers of the Fanes got the firſt, and the Poor of the Town the latter. All they believ'd in relation to the Gods, beſides the Piety and the Prayers, was only, that the Steam of the burnt Sacrifice aſcended up to Heaven, and delighted or (if you will) fed the Gods. This *Homer* would have told him too, That *Libation* and *Steam* was the only ſhare the Gods had in any Offering:

* Λοιβῆς τε κνιοσῆς τε, τὸ γὰρ λάχομεν γέρας ἡμεῖς.

Whence *Aristophanes* in his Play, call'd *The Birds*, makes a City to be built in the Air, on purpoſe to ſtop all intercourſe between Heaven and Earth, That no *Smoke from Sacrifices* ſhould aſcend to the Gods: and preſently *Prometheus* is introduc'd, bringing the News, That the Gods were almoſt ſtarv'd, having not had one particle of Steam, ſince *Nephelococcygia* was built. Tis true indeed, there was another Notion, * that the Gods often came down from Heaven in Human Shape, to inquire into the Actions of Men, and ſo like Strangers and Pilgrims were unawares entertain'd, and (ſeemingly) eat and drank with their Hoſts. But this is nothing to the *Prieſts*, nor to the aſſertion of the Author: who no doubt will not be found a moſt ſubtle Interpreter of *Solomon* and the *Prophets*; after he has been ſo miſerably impoſ'd on by that ſilly and ſpurious Book, *Beſide the Dragon*.

* Odyſſ. p. v. 485.

XIV.

After a few thredbare narratives about the *Armenian*, *Greek*, and *Popish* Priests, the *miraculous Flame* at *Jerusalem*, and the melting *Blood* at *Naples*; he has his sling at Us *Lutherans*. * *The Lutheran Priests*, says he, *contrary to the testimony of Men's senses, make their Followers believe, That the Body and Blood of Christ are superadded to the Bread and Wine*: which he parallels with an old Story, as lewd as it's vulgar. Now, though I am more concern'd in This Remark, than many Others, for the particular honour of Our Church; I design not to launch out in a Vindication of our Doctrine, which this Scribler understands no more, than he did that of the *Aegyptians*. You know something of the University of *Leipsic*; we are reputed the greatest *Latitudinarians* and *Free-thinkers* of our Sect, not near so stiff and rigid as those of *Wittenberg* or *Jene*: and yet I'll tell this Author, If he had publish'd his wretched Libel with Us; without any instigation from the Priests the Magistrate would soon have taken care of him, either in a Prison or a Dark Room. What his reception will be in *England*, I pretend not to guess. You have a glorious Liberty there, the Parent of many noble Books, which under a less freedom of Thought would never have been wrote. And 'tis that Novelty of Notions that makes the product of the *English* Press so inquir'd after here. But I fear, the outrageous Licence of this Author and others of his Stamp will in time have an unexpected Effect, and oblige Your Government to abridge All of that good Freedom, which These have so much abus'd. And then we Foreigners of Curio-

sity, when we shall see nothing come from *Britain* but stanch and staple Postils, must curse the impious memory of this Writer and his whole Tribe.

XV.

Tantum rem tam neglegenter? The Question he proposes to consider is no less than this, * *Whether the Christian Religion is founded on Divine Revelation?* This he resolves to examin and determin *by himself*. And we may easily foresee what the Sentence will be, under so ignorant and corrupt a Judge. Nay his Book sufficiently shews, he has given his Verdict already; and resolv'd, that Darkness is brighter and more desirable than Light. Let us bestow a few reflexions on his Conduct: for, for all his noise about Speculation *in general*, This Question is the whole affair and business, the whole Compass and Sphere of modern FREE-THINKING.

What in common Life would denote a man Rash, Fool-hardy, Hair-brain'd, Opiniatre, Craz'd, is recommended in This Scheme as the true method in Speculation. Are you dangerously sick? you will call an able Physician. Is your Estate threatn'd and attackt? you'l consult the best Lawyer. But have you an affair upon your hands, wherein your very Soul and Being and all Eternity lye at stake? (*—Neque enim ludicra petuntur Praemia*) Why there you are to seek no help, but confide in your own abilities. That is, If you have a very deep and broad River to pass; scorn to ask for Cork or Bladders; flounce in, and hazard all, though you have never learnt to Swim.

This rational Author (p, 107,) puts the same Objection to himself: and he notably answers it thus:

* Pag. 26.

A man, says he, of no Profession may have as much Law, Physic, and Divinity, as any Serjeant or Doctor of them all: and then with a Quaker's story out of his Friend Mr. *Le Clerc*, he declares That to be a happy Country, a very Paradise, where none of those Three Professions is admitted. And who doubts, but in this reply, there's as much Sense as good Manners?

But for all this Author's great Skill in *Physic* and *Law*; he'l hardly make himself Sick on purpose, or bring on a Trial against his own Estate, to shew his great Abilities. Why then will he needlessly and voluntarily run a risk for his Soul and Salvation? and fool-hardily put his head under a Weight, that may crush him to Death? The strange difference in this Conduct, when examin'd to the bottom, will open the whole Mystery of *Free-thinking* and *Atheism*.

'Tis plain, a Man that is born in a Christian Country, if he is a Just and Good Man, has no interest to wish That Religion false. The Moral Precepts fall in with his own opinion and choice: no restraints are laid upon him, but what out of paternal affection he would forbid his own Son. No foreign Religion, much less the Atheistic Scheme, threaten him with any Danger; should he be here in an Error. He's as safe, as those that differ from him, were he really in the wrong. But then if it be true; what glorious Promises and Rewards, not superior only to other Schemes, but beyond all Human Wishes? The speculative Doctrines in it (which affect the main chance) are very few and easy. If his Education has enabl'd him for't, he'l examin Them and the whole grounds of Faith, and find them true to his satisfaction and comfort. If he's engag'd in active and busy Life; he'l acquiesce in the
Judg-

Judgments of those, who have better means and leasure to know them.

Thus it is, will be, and must be ; while Men lead such virtuous Lives, as entitle them to the *Promises* of Religion. And were there not equal *Threats* in it on the other hand, were it all Heaven without any Hell, there would not be one Atheist (unless *Crackbraind*) in Christendom. I positively affirm, that no man in his senses, educated in our Holy Religion, ever did or could fall from it to Atheism; *isnt the* till by considering his own Actions and Designs, he *Question* despair'd of the Promises of Christianity, and look'd upon it with Fear and Terror.

9. In that case indeed, and in that alone, out of uneasiness of Mind they wish all Religion was false : and that's the Original of modern *Free-thinking*. Then they ransack all impious Books for Objections against it : they're byass'd in their favor ; a single Ounce in that Scale buoys up a hundred in the other. *Pagans, Mahometans, Pawawers and Talapoins*, are all good Vouchers against Christianity. All that's said by *Christians* (and who else must speak for them) is suspected for Craft and Design. And the very ignorance of these *Free-thinkers* does them more Service than Knowledge. For who can deal with an *Ignoramus*, that is warpt by his Inclination, fixt there by his Conceitedness, jealous of all contrary Instruction, and uncapable of seeing the Force of it?

That This is the very Case of our Author and those of his Club, is pretty notorious. Inquire closely into their Lives, and there you will find the true Reason, why they clamor against Religion. For when they have settled themselves in Atheism; they are then elevated with *Joy* and *Mirth*, as if they had obtain'd a great Conquest. Now this is wholly unnatural, unless Religion is view'd by them as the greatest

greatest of Terrors. What? rejoice that we have lost Immortality, and must dye like the Beasts? Utterly impossible! all the Springs of Human Passions resist and refute it. Misery at that rate may excite Laughter, and Prosperity Tears: Indignation may raise Love, and Complacency Revenge. But if once Heaven is desponded of, and Hell opens its horrible Mouth; then indeed *Mountains are desir'd to cover us*; and the thoughts of Destruction or Annihilation may really produce Joy.

This, I say again, is the true Origin of *Free-thinking*, and not the Force of any Objections against the Truth of Christianity: and as a proof, I appeal to This very Book. For no doubt the Writer has couch'd in it the strongest Objections he was master of. And yet Those are so old and stale; that if They could have any operation, Christianity would have been extinct above a Thousand Years ago. Well! but they had influence upon Him, and would have so upon others, if Fear and Force were remov'd, and Men left at free Liberty. So far from that; so far is our Author from seeing deeper into those Objections than others before him; that (as I'll presently prove) he understands not the mere Grammatical sense, much less the application and import, of any old Passage he cites.

XVI.

* It's the great Benefit, says he, of *Free-thinking*, that the suppos'd Power of the Devil in *Possessions* and *Witchcrafts* has visibly declin'd in *England*, since a Liberty to think freely has been given and taken there. A quaint conceit indeed, and very far fetch'd. So that You in *Great Britain* ow it to this *rising Sect*,

that you have not so many Prosecutions of *Witches* as formerly. This is *Thraso* again exactly :

*Labore alieno magno partam gloriam
Verbis in sese transmovet, qui habet salem.*

I do not think, any *English* Priest will or need affirm in general, That there are now no real Instances of Sorcery or Witchcraft; especially while you have public Law (which They neither enacted nor procur'd,) declaring those practices to be Felony. But I must needs say, that while I sojourn'd among you, I observ'd fewer of the Clergy give in to particular Stories of that kind, than of the Commonalty or Gentry. In the dark times before the Reformation, not because they were Popish, but because Unlearn'd, any extraordinary Disease attended with odd Symptoms, strange Ravings or Convulsions, absurd Eating or Egestion, was out of ignorance of *Natural* Powers ascrib'd to *Diabolical*. This Superstition was universal, from the Cottages to the very Courts; nor was it ingrafted by Priestcraft, but is implanted in Human Nature: no Nation is exempted from it; nor our Author's *Paradise* of *New Jersey*, where no Priests have yet footing: and if the next Ages become unlearn'd, That Superstition will, I will not say return, but spring up anew. What then has lessen'd in *England* your stories of Sorceries? Not the *growing Sect*, but the Growth of Philosophy and Medicine. No thanks to Atheists, but to the Royal Society and College of Physicians; to the *Boyle's* and *Newton's*, the *Sydenham's* and *Ratcliff's*. When the People saw the Diseases, they had imputed to Witchcraft, quite cur'd by a course of Physic; they too were cur'd of their former Error: they learn'd

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Truth

Truth by the *Event*; not by a false position *a priori*. That there was neither Witch, Devil, nor God. And then as to the Frauds and Impostures in this way; they have most of them been detected by the *Clergy*; whom our Writer here wickedly libels as Complices and Parties in them. The two strongest Books I have read on this Subject were both written by *Priests*; the one by Dr. *Becker* in *Holland*, and the other by a Dr. of your own, whose name I've forgot, that was afterwards Archbishop of *York*.

XVII.

We are now come to his II. Section, where he brings several Arguments to prove the Duty and Necessity of *Free-thinking* upon *Religious Questions*. Now take *Free-thinking* in that Open sense that Himself takes it in, when he ascribes it to *Chillingworth*, *Taylor*, and *Tillotson*; and you may grant all his Arguments, and yet quite disappoint him. But if you take it in that Interior meaning, that the Members of his Club do, as a modish and decent word for *Atheism*; then all his Arguments are mere Trumpery; and his Consequences from them are as short, as his occasional Learning in them is shallow.

One of his Capital Arguments is from the *Evil of*
 * SUPERSTITION, which *terrible Evil* and *great Vice* can never be avoided, but by turning *Free-thinker*, that is (in plainer *English*) abandoning all Religion. Strange! That *Superstition* and *Religion*, which have been distinguish'd and divided this two thousand Years, should yet stick so fast together, that our Author cannot separate them: so that to ease himself of the One, he must abdicate Both. His dismal *Description* of it is in the words of *Cicero*; which

* *Pag.* 33.

chiefly

chiefly relate to little Bigotries in Civil Life, not to fabulous Conceptions about the Supreme Being. And his Inference from thence is exactly, as if I should now say to You: *Sir*, you must renounce your Baptism and Faith, or else you can never be rid of those terrible Superstitions about the *Death-watch*, *Thirteen at one Table*, *Spilling of Salt*, and *Childermas-day*.

XVIII.

But you'l know the Man better, his great Reading and Penetration, when you see how he manages and translates that Passage of *Cicero*: I'll give you it here, both in the Original, and our Author's Version.

* *Instat enim (Superstitio) & urget, & quo te cumque verteris, persequitur: si ve vatem, si ve tu omen audieris; si ve immolaris, si ve avem aspexeris; si Chaldaicum, si haruspicem videris; si fulserit, si tonuerit; si tactum aliquid erit de caelo; si ostenti simile natum factumve quippiam: quorum necesse est plerumque aliquid eveniat; ut numquam liceat quieta mente consistere, Perfugium videtur omnium laborum & sollicitudinum esse somnus: at ex eo ipso plurimae curae metusque nascuntur. Cic. de Div. II. 72.*

If you give way to Superstition, it will ever haunt and plague you. If you go to a Prophet, or regard Omens; if you Sacrifice, or observe the Flight of Birds; if you consult an Astrologer or Haruspex: if it thunders or lightens, or any place is consum'd with Lightning, or such like Prodigy happens (as it is necessary some such often should) all the Tranquillity of the Mind is destroy'd. And Sleep it self, which seems to be an Asylum and Refuge from all Trou-

* Pag. 35.

ble and uneasiness, does by the aid of Superstition increase your Troubles and Fears.

Now if it shall appear; that our Author has misconstru'd almost every Part and Comma of this Passage; that he has made the First parts contradict the Last, and so has put his own Nonsense upon the great Original; that he has weakned his own design, and made the Place speak with less strength against Superstition, than it really does; what apprehensions are we to have of so formidable a Writer?

The whole Tour of the Passage is this: A man given to Superstition can have no security, day or night, waking or sleeping: for Occasions of it will force themselves upon him, *against his will*; do what he can to prevent them: and so all the Particulars here specifi'd are *involuntary and unsought*.

Sive tu vatem, sive tu omen audieris: If you go to a Prophet, says our Translator, or REGARD Omens. Pray, where's the Latin to answer Go and Regard? or where is common sense, thus plainly to beg the Question? For if one goes upon superstitious Errands, no doubt he's troubl'd with Superstition. The true sense is this: If you hear a Lunatic or Frantic in the streets foretelling some mischiefs; if a Word is spoken accidentally in your hearing, which may be interpreted Ominous. The Vates or Divini were Mad-fellows bawling in the Streets and Rodes; and their Predictions might be contemn'd, but must necessarily be heard, if you came that way.

Sive immolaris, sive avem aspexeris: A Man was obliged often to Sacrifice, even by his Office; and Birds must needs be seen, if one step but out of Rome. These occurrences therefore were unavoidable; and so Cicero meant them. Si Chaldaicum, sive Haruspicum videris; If you see them; and That could not be prevented, all public Places being haunted with

with them. But what does our Translator make of these? *If you sacrifice*, says he, or OBSERVE the flight of Birds; if you CONSULT an Astrologer or Haruspex. Pure Nonsense again: and point blank against Cicero's meaning: One makes that done by Design, what the other makes by Accident. If by accident; then its true, that Superstition (*instat & urget*) haunts and plagues one, and there's no escaping it: but if by design; 'tis labouring in a Fairy Circle, 'tis begging and supposing the thing in debate.

To pass in silence his false Version of *De caelo ractum*, Consum'd with Lightning, instead of Blasted; the next instance of his Dulness surpasses all belief. *Si ostenti simile natum factumve quippiam*: that is, If any Monster is born, or something like a Prodigy happens; as Raining of Blood or Wheat or the like. You see, Cicero says *ostenti Simile*, LIKE a Prodigy: for his Part in that Discourse was to deny there were true Prodigies. A Monster with two Heads was no prodigy, but was occasion'd by Natural Causes: the Blood or Wheat, was either a mistake, or was carried up by a Whirlwind. But behold now, how our Translator has manag'd it: *If any SUCH-LIKE Prodigy happens*. This version, I am sure, is a greater Prodigy, than any of them all. What, *Ostenti simile*, a *such-like Prodigy*? 'Tis manifest by his Construction, he join'd them in the same Case, as Adjective and Substantive. Stupidity incredible! I'll leave every man to his own Astonishment, and say no more of the matter. I'll only ask him, not where his Grammar, but where his Brains were; when by owning and confessing *Such-like Prodigies*, he frustrated both Cicero's and his own Argument?

To go on once more; *Quorum necesse est plerumque aliquid eveniat*; that is, *Of which things* (all that were enumerated before) *some or other* MUST frequently happen. Observe that MUST, *necesse est*, must happen of necessity. And now you see, what I said before, that our Translator has made the First parts of the Passage contradict the Last. And if he'd had the least grain of Sagacity; this last *Comma* might have guided him to the true meaning of the former; that the Instances must all be *accidental*, and not *voluntary* and with design. Take the several Instances reckon'd up; and 'tis hardly possible to pass one day in common Life, but some Objects of Superstition will necessarily present themselves: but is it necessary to go to Prophets, to regard Omens, to observe Birds, to consult Astrologers? Surely these four Verbs have the signification of *Choice*, not of *Necessity*. And now, Gentlemen of the *English* Clergy, what think you of your *Free-thinker*? Did I not promise for him; that he would manage his old Passages with great Ability and Dexterity?

Dixin' ego in hoc esse vobis Atticam elegantiam?

XIX.

He's so pleas'd with this Subject of *Superstition*, that he holds us in it still with two most Common Citations: for what can there be that is not so, in *Horace* and *Virgil*? *Horace*, it seems, despises *Dreams*, *Witches*, *Spectres*, and *Prodigies*; and *Virgil* goes something further. And what then? Both these were bred young in the *Epicurean* School, and so speak here the language of their Sect. They prove nothing, they only affirm. And so the Argument is no more than this; Miracles, Religion, the Pains of

of Hell are false, because *Epicurus's* Doctrine was against them. A notable Proof indeed; were the Passages never so well handled: but, as ill Luck and worse Ignorance would have it, he has maim'd and murder'd them both. Take that of *Horace* with the Author's Version:

*Somnia, terrores Magicos, miracula, sagas,
Nocturnos lemures, portentaque Thessala rides?*

Are you so much above Superstition, as to laugh at all Dreams, Panick Fears, Miracles, Witches, Ghosts, and Prodigies?

Magicos terrores, Panick Fears in the Translation: so very unhappily, that Both the words are wrong. For *Terrores* are not *Fears* here, the Internal passion of the mind; but External *Terrors*, the Tricks and Artifices of *Wizards* to fright, scare, and terrify. And then by substituting *Panick* for *Magick*; he has just serv'd *Horace* as he did *Cicero*; and made him talk compleat Nonsense. A general Fright, falling upon an Army or City, as if the Enemy was at the Camp or the Gates; when the Alarm was found to be false and groundless, the *Greeks* call'd a *Panick*, as if the God *Pan* was the Author of it. Now its plain, that these Frights (when there's probability in the Alarm, and the Enemy lies within due distance) can never be known to be *Panick* and Vain; till the business is over. In the mean time Wise and Foolish are both under the *Panick*: Φεύγοντι ἡ παῖ-
des θεῶν, says *Pindar*; in such Cases the very Heroes, and Sons of the Gods run away. What sense therefore can he make of this *English*, he has bestow'd on *Horace*? *Are you so much above Superstition, as to laugh at Panick fears?* What, laugh in the beginning or hight of them? Here's a sudden Alarm comes
at

at midnight, that all *Rome* is on Fire : is not *Horace* to stir out of his Bed, but to fall a *laughing*, and ly still? A sagacious Interpreter! not to reflect, that *Panick Fear* is no object of Superstition; and consequently could not come with the rest of that List in *Horace*. Unless his Worship will say, That the Precept here is, *to laugh at Panick Fears, after they are known to be so*. A merry Precept indeed! which Those that were most scared, will be the readiest to follow; when once their Fears are vanish'd, and the Alarm is over.

XX.

And now for the Passage of *Virgil*, and his accurate Translation :

*Felix, qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,
Atque metus omnes, & inexorabile fatum
Subjecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari.*

* *Happy is the Man, who has discover'd the Causes of Things, and is thereby cured of all kind of Fears, even of Death it self, and all the Noise and Din of Hell.*

Happy, says the Poet, in the first place is the *Philosopher*; in the second the *Countryman*. Now under the notion of a *Philosopher*, he describes an *Epicurean*; having been bred under his Master *Sciron*, a Teacher in that Sect : and in Three lines he has admirably couch'd the principal Opinions, they were known by or valued themselves upon, *That there's no Divine Providence, no Destiny nor Divination, and no Immortality of the Soul.*

Rerum cognoscere causas, discover the Causes of Things. Of what Things, and with what Design?

Of all the Meteors in the Heavens, Thunder, Lightning, &c. and of things on Earth, that are seemingly portentous and miraculous; in order to rid Men's minds of all Religion and its Fears. For in the *Epicurean Scheme*, *The Ignorance of Causes* was the sole Cause of Religious Fears; as *Lucretius* avers, with whose comfortable Lines our Author may here entertain himself :

*Cetera, quae fieri in terris caeloque tuentur
Mortales, pavidis cum pendent mentibu' saepe,
Efficiunt animos humiles formidine Divum,
Depressosque premunt ad terram; propterea quod
IGNORANTIA CAUSSARUM conferre Deorum
Cogit ad imperum res, & concedere regnum:
Quorum operum causas nulla ratione videre
Possunt, ac fieri divino numine rentur.*

'Tis plain therefore, what *Virgil* means by *Causes* : and then *Atque metus omnes subjecit pedibus*, who has lain all Fears under the feet, is as if he had said, Has trampled and triumph'd over all Religion: for That the Poet understands here by *Fears*. *METUS*, religio; says *Nonius Marcellus*; for which he cites these Verses of the *Aeneis*,

*Laurus erat tecti medio in penetralibus altis,
Sacra comam, multosque metu servata per annos.*

Where *Servius* too agrees with him; *METU*, says he, religio, quae nascitur per timorem. And so *Lucretius* very dreadfully paints Religion;

*Cucurrit a caeli regionibus ostendebat,
Horribili super aspectu mortalibus instans.*

Whence by the way you may observe, that the old Masters in Atheism, as well as the Disciples of the new Club, took Shelter in their System out of pure *Dread* and *Fear*.

The next *Comma* of the Passage is *Inexorabile fatum, Inexorable Fate*; by which the Poet means, That the *Epicurean* Doctrine had trampled down the whole notion of *Destiny* and *Divination*. That the followers of that Sect denied Εἰμαρμένην ἢ Μαντικὴν, *Fate* and *Predictions*, is too vulgarly known, to be here prov'd or insisted on. And so we are come to the last Clause, *Streptitumque Acherontis avari*; where every one sees the *Epicurean* Assertion, *That the Soul dies with the Body*.

To return now to our Learned Writer. How dextrously has he manag'd his Game; to bring a Passage, that bears full against all *Religion* whatever, as level'd against some small Bigotries and *Superstitious fears*? And what a proper Inference has he added? *Well has Virgil spoke thus; FOR by Free-thinking alone, we know that God made and governs the World*. What, from this passage of *Virgil*, that's directly against *Creation* and *Providence*? Never sure was poor *FOR* put so hard to't before, or imploy'd in such bungling work. He understood not one line of the place, as will appear by his Version. *And is thereby cured, says he, of all kind of Fears, even of Death it self*. What does the man talk of cured? Is cured the same with *subjecit pedibus*? Is the cure of one man's private *Fears* (any more than of his *Corns*) the same with *trampling under foot the fears of all Mankind*, and the whole Notion of Religion? For That, as I have said, is the thought of the Poet, and is borrow'd from these lines of *Lucretius*:

Quare RELIGIO PEDIBUS SUBJECTA *vicissim*
Obteritur, nos exaequat victoria caelo.

And then *Fatum inexorabile*, our wise Interpreter translates it *Death*; which the very Epithet would have hinder'd; had he the least tast of good Writing, though he'd known nothing of *Fatis avolsa voluntas*, *The Liberty of Will*, and Contingency of all Events, which *Epicurus* maintain'd against the *Stoics*. And yet, *The DIVINE Virgil*, says our judicious Author. He is very easily satisfied; if what little He comprehends of him, appears to have *Divinity* in it. For let the Poet be never so *divine* in the Original; 'tis plain he's lower than *human* in this Writer's Version and Understanding.

XXI.

Between the two Passages of *Horace* and *Virgil*, our Author scatters a short Reflexion, that shews his mighty Learning. **The Evil*, says he, of *Superstition* is now much increas'd, and Men are under greater Terrors and uneasiness of Mind, than Pagans of old possibly could be, when they thought they hazarded less. This manifestly shews, that he thinks *Eternal Torments* were never imagin'd in the *Pagan Scheme*, but were first introduc'd by Christianity. Just contrary. The Vulgar in Paganism universally believ'd them, as his Friend *Lucretius* would have told him in Express Terms :

——*Nam si certam finem esse viderent*
Aerumnarum homines, aliqua ratione valerent
Religionibus atque minis obistere Vatum:

* Pag. 36.

*Nunc ratio nulla est restandi, nulla facultas;
AETERNAS quoniam POENAS in morte timendum.*

Nay this is the very thing, that our Writer quoted out of *Virgil*, *Strepitus Acherontis avari*, the terrible Noise and Rumor of *Acheron*: to have trampled upon which, would have been a foolish Boast of the *Epicureans*, if the generality of Mankind had not believ'd it. And what, pray, was the pretended Privilege of the famous *Elesinian* Rites at *Athens*, in which *Augustus* himself was initiated? Was it not, that the Partakers of them were convey'd into some happy Station after Death; while all the rest of Men were for ever to be rowld, ὁ βορβόρος, in dirt and mire and other Scenes of Misery. And yet how low even that *Happy State* was commonly thought, appears from the sentiment of *Achilles's* Ghost in *Homer*: Who, when he is complemented by *Ulysses* as the Happiest of Men, both alive and dead; makes answer, That he had rather alive be a poor Day-Labourer to the meanest Peasant, than be Emperor of all the Dead:

Ἡ πᾶσιν νικύεσσι κατὰφθιμένοισιν ἀνάσσειν.

'Tis so false then, what our Author lays down here, That the Pagan Religion gave less uneasiness in Life, because they thought they hazarded less after Death, than We Christians think we do: that it's certain, they thought Bad men hazarded as much, and Good men obtain'd infinitely less.

XXII.

He comes now to a IV Argument for the absolute necessity of *Free-thinking on Religious Questions*, and that * is from the infinite number of *Pretenders to Revelation*: which he afterwards dully repeats under another Head, in the † *Bramins, Persees, Bonzes, Talapoins, and Dervizes*, to which he might have added several more. Now here is his perpetual Juggle about his Term of Art, *Free-thinking*. Take it in the common sense, and we agree with him. Think *freely* on all the various Pretences to Revelation; compare the Counterfeit *Scriptures* with the True, and see the Divine Lustre of the One, to which all the others serve as a Foil. It was upon this very account, that Christians took the pains to translate and publish them; not to confound Religion, but to confirm it. And yet the occult meaning of our Author is, From the variety of *Scriptures* to insinuate none is true. An Argument as weak, as it's stale; and baffl'd over and over. Could this Reasoning have any effect, Christianity had never begun. For besides the true *living Oracles* of the Jews, was not the whole World then full of False ones, written and divulg'd? and *Oracular Temples* (or *Churches* if he will) then in being to deliver out more? Even *suppose* Christianity to be true; yet those Impostures must necessarily be, while Human Nature is what it is: and our *Scriptures* have foretold it. Is That then a good Argument *backwards* against the Truth of any thing; which *a priori* is plain must happen so, tho' that Thing be *allow'd* to be true?

* Pag. 40. † Pag. 52.

But a very extraordinary Line has slip'd from our Author here; *If a man*, says he, *be under any Obligation to listen to Any Revelation at all.* This Thought it seems was a little *too Free*, and so a *Dele* corrects it in the List of *Errata*. 'Tis very easy to sift and toss this fine Thought, which would afford good Diversion: for besides its own filliness, it contradicts all the rest, and spoils the whole Grimace of the Book. But we'll spare it, since the Author himself has chastis'd it; at the hint (I suppose) of a graver Member of the Club: who was not for discovering the whole Farce at once, and shewing the Actors to be mere *Puppets*.

XXIII.

We have heard here of the much applauded Foundation of your *Society for propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts*; which this despicable Scribler, though he owns it is supported and encourag'd by * *Her most Excellent Majesty*, and the Chief Persons of the Kingdom, dares openly ridicule. This is much such a sawcy and slovenly *Freedom*, as the rest of the *Greeks* laugh'd at in the Islanders of *Corfu*;

Ἐλευθέρα Κέρκυρα, ἥζ' ὄπῃ θέλεις.
Corcyra certe libera est; ubi vis, caca.

For our cleanly Author here assumes the like or worse Licence, to lay his Filth and Ordure even upon the Throne and the Altar.

We envy not your due *Liberty*, the most valuable Blessing of good Government: but if such Insults, even upon Majesty it self and all that's accounted Sa-

* *Pag.* 41.

cred, are allow'd among you with Impunity, it gives no great Prefage of your lasting Prosperity;

—nimia illaec Licentia

Profecto evadet in aliquod magnum malum.

But to leave unpleasing Thoughts; and for once to answer a Fool according to his Folly. Are the *Talapoins of Siam* then to be put here upon a level with the whole *Clergy of England*, the Light and Glory (if they are not chang'd all on a sudden) of present Christianity? And this done by a sorry Retailer of Atheistical Scraps, which he understands not three Lines of; but at the first offer of a Translation betrays his Stupidity? Is He to draw out your *Divines*; whose Names we know not here, because he has mangled 'em: but conclude them to be Men of Worth and Distinction, from the very Credit of his abusing them? If he is once for drawing out, and reviving the old Trade of *Ἀνδραποδωνικία* selling and exporting of Men; it may perhaps be found more serviceable to your Government, to oblige your *East India Company* to take on board the whole *Growing Sect*, and lodge them at *Madagascar* among their confess'd and claim'd Kindred (since they make Themselves but a higher Species of Brutes) the *Monkeys* and the *Drills*: or to order your new *South Sea Company* to deliver them to the *Spaniards* as part of the *Assiento*, to be *Free-diggers* in the Mines there; and after a decent time in that *Purgatory* to convey them to their *Happy Country*, their * *Paradise of New Jersey*; where neither *Priest*, nor *Physician*, nor *Lawyer* can molest them.

Pa: 43

* Pag. 108.

This piece of Wit seems to be Drawn out Not without some pretty hard Pulling.

So I stop, at least, till I had look'd XXIV.

back to Page 43, w^h. Bentley should ha' look'd.

XXIV.

Well, but Vithly * *The Gospel it self, and our Saviour and his Apostles by their own Example, recommend Free-thinking.* Grant the Scribler this Argument; if *Free-thinking* is taken in its legitimate Sense, as *Chillingworth, Hooker, and Wilkins* made use of that Freedom. But if he juggles, as usually, in the Term of Art; what greater Nonsense, Than that Christ and his Disciples should recommend Atheism? But our Author's Learning is here again admirably display'd. St. Paul, says he, *when he went into the Synagogues of the Jews, and reason'd with them, took a very extraordinary Step,* as now it would be look'd on: and so he compares it to PENN the Quaker going into St. Paul's, or Mr. WHISTON into the House of Convocation, to reason there against the Establish'd Church. Penn's name has been long known among us in Germany; and the Latter we have lately heard of in the Journals and Bibliothèques. But how ignorant and stupid is this Writer with his foolish Comparison? The Fact, he speaks of and quotes *Acts xvii, 2, 3.* was done at *Thessalonica* a Pagan City in *Macedonia*: and was the Jewish Synagogue the Establish'd Church there? or rather allow'd upon Toleration? But to pardon him this, and suppose the thing done in *Judaea* it self, where our Saviuor often did the same: was it any thing like to *interrupting Divine Service, or disturbing the Proceedings of a Synod?* Our Author knows not one tittle of the manner and custom of a Synagogue.

{ After reading a few Sections out of the Law and the Prophets; the ablest men of the Assembly us'd to stand up and expound the Passages read: and if any

* Pag. 44.

Stranger or person of Note chanc'd to be there; he was ask'd by them, if he had any Discourse to impart to the Congregation. This is expressly affirm'd by *Philo the Jew*, and others; and appears clearly from *Acts XIII, 15.* where at *Antioch in Pisidia* the Rulers of the Synagogue, seeing *Paul and Barnabas* Strangers there, sent unto them, saying, *Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.* So that if even *Penn and Whiston* should do no more, but speak when desir'd by Authority, it would be no extraordinary step at all. The only step here that appears very extraordinary, is our Author's bold Leaping into the Dark; and blundering about matters, where he's quite blind and ignorant.

XXV.

But he proceeds in his Argument from our Saviour's Gospel and Example; and declares it impossible, * *That Christ should give so partial a Command, as to contain a Reserve in behalf of any Set of Priests, in prejudice of the general Rules of Free-thinking.* Our Author is often very Orthodox, when he opposes what no body affirms, or affirms what no body opposes. And yet that very Orthodoxy is all Artifice and Craft, to insinuate as if the Clergy did really maintain the one, or deny the other. Pray, who is it that challenges such a Reserve? He has named a Reverend Doctor here of his side: name another, if he can, that's against him. The thing he seems to contend for, is true and allow'd him: but he has given such an awkward Reason for't, as would spoil his own Inference: if better Hands than His did not support it. † *All the Priests upon Earth,*

* † Pag. 46.

says he, *being* (in our Saviour's life-time) *Enemies to Him and his Gospel, and He giving the privilege of Infallibility to no body besides his Apostles; He could not be secure that any Priests could ever be otherwise.* Is the Stupidity of this greater, or the Impiety? Was not He *secure* of That, who declar'd, *He would be with his Church to the end of the World,* and that *The Gates of Hell should never prevail against it?* But to let this pass (for if I mistake not our Author's Principles, he had rather be prov'd an Impious or Knaveish Writer ten times, than a Silly one once) I affirm further, that this Assertion of his is absolute Nonsense; though *Jesus Christ* were *suppos'd* to be an Impostor. For his Argument lyes thus: Because the *Jewish* and *Pagan* Priests were once Enemies to *Christ* and his Gospel; He could not be *secure*, that *any* of his OWN Priests would ever be otherwise. A most powerful Syllogism! At this rate no Sect of Philosophy, no Heresy, nor False Religion would ever have been set up or thought of. Because all other Sects oppos'd *Zeno*, when he first founded *Stoicism*; he could not be *secure*, that the *Stoics* his own Followers would ever do otherwise. Because *Socinus* found all People at first against Him and his Notions, he could not be *secure*, but that the very *Socinians* would always be as much against them. Because all Priests abhor'd *Mahomet's Alcoran*, when first it was broach'd; He could not be *secure*, that his own *Musties and Der-vizes* would not always abhor it. This, you'll say, is very strange: but I'll concede our Author one thing, which looks a little parallel to't: That tho' He's the Chief of the *rising and growing Sect*, and has publish'd their *New Gospel*; he cannot be *secure*, that his own Fraternity and Members of the Club may not soon be asham'd both of Him and It.

XXVI.

And now we come to a new Argument, *From the Conduct of the Priests*, which by a tedious Induction is branch'd out into Ten Instances, and takes up half a hundred Pages. And what will be the grand Result?

Nae iste hercle magno jam conatu magnas nugas dixerit.

The Sum of it is no more than this, *The Priests cannot agree among themselves about several points of Doctrine, the Attributes of God, the Canon of Scripture &c. and therefore I'll be of no Religion at all.* This threadbare obsolete Stuff, the most obvious surmise that any wavering Fool catches at, when he first warps towards Atheism, is dress'd up here as if it was some new and formidable business.

What great feats can our Author now promise himself from This; which, after it has been tried Age after Age, never had influence on Mankind, either in Religious Concerns, or Common Life? *Till all agree, I'll stand Nenter.* Very well; and till all the World speaks one Language, pray be You mute and say nothing. It were much the wiser way; than to talk as you have done. By this Rule, the *Roman* Gentry were to learn no Philosophy at all, till the *Greeks* could unite into one Sect; nor make use of any Physician, till the *Empirics* and *Methodists* concurr'd in their way of Practice. How came Christianity to begin; since the Objection now brought to pull it down was as visible and potent then as now? or how has it subsisted so long; since all the present Discord in Opinions does not near amount to the Sum of what *Epiphanius* alone collected a-

bove a Thousand Years ago? Nay how came our Author's new Sect to be *Rising* and *Growing*; since the Atheists are as much at variance among themselves, and can settle and centre in nothing? Or if they should resolve to conspire in one certain System; they would be *Atheists* indeed still, but they would lose the Title of *Free-thinkers*.

This is the Total of his long Induction; but let us see his Conduct in the parts of it. Some *Fathers* thought *God* to be *Material*; this He has said and I have answer'd before in *Remark* the X. * *Several antient Christian Priests of Egypt were so gross, as to conceive God to be in the shape of a Man.* If they did so, they were no more gross than His Master *Epicurus*, who was of the very same Opinion. But it's fatal to our Author, ever to blunder when he talks of *Egypt*. These *Priests of Egypt* were all illiterate *Laymen*, the Monks or Hermits of those Days, that retir'd into the Desert, the fittest place for their Stupidity. † *But several of Your English Divines tax each other with Atheism*, either positively, or consequently. Wonderful! and so because Three or Four Divines in Your Island are too fierce in their Disputes, all We on the great Continent must abandon Religion. Yes, but the ¶ *Bramins*, the *Mahometans*, &c. pretend to *Scriptures* as well as *We*. This too has come once already, and is consider'd in *Remark* the XXII. but being so great a piece of News, deserv'd to be told twice. And who, without his telling, would have known, that the ** *Romish Church* receiv'd the *Apocrypha*, as Canonical? Be that as it will; I am sure it is unheard of News, that Your Church receives them as *** *Half Canonical*. I find no such word in Your

* *Pag.* 47. † *Pag.* 48. ¶ *Pag.* 52. ** *Pag.* 53. *** *Pag.* 53.

Articles; nor ever saw a *such-like Prodigy* before. *Half Canonical*? what Idea, what Sense has it? 'tis exactly the same, as *Half Divine, Half Infinite, Half Omnipotent*. But away with his *Apocrypha*; He'll like it the worse while he lives, for the sake of *Bel and the Dragon*.

XXVII.

But now to make room for his Learning again: for * *the Rabbi's*, says he, *among the Samaritans, who now live at Sichem in Palestine, receive the five Books of Moses for their Scripture; the Copy whereof is very different from Ours*. What shall I admire most, his Ignorance, or his Impudence? Why the RABBI'S at *Sichem*, exclusive and by way of Distinction? Do's not the whole *Samaritan Nation* receive the Pentateuch, as well as their *Rabbi's*? 'Tis just as if he had said; *Among the English, the Reverend Divines receive the Bible*. But is not Their Copy of the five Books of *Moses* VERY DIFFERENT from Ours? No question, he has often affirm'd This with great Sufficiency at his Club; though de does not know one Letter of the Language. The *Samaritan Pentateuch* has now been printed above half a Century; and the various Readings, wherein it differs from the *Jewish*, have been twice collected and publish'd, even to the minutest Letter; first by *Morinus* at *Paris*, and afterwards anew by Your *Walton* at *London*, both of them *Priests*. I have perus'd those Various Lecti-
 ons; and do affirm here on my own Knowledge,
 That those Two Copies differ no more from each
 other; than the same Book, (*Terence, Tully, Ovid,*
 or the like) differs from it self, in the several Ma-

* Pag. 53.

nuscripts that I my self have examin'd. So that it's a plain Demonstration, that the Copies were originally the same : nor can better Evidence be desir'd, that the *Jewish* Bibles have not been corrupted or interpolated, than this very Book of the *Samaritans*; which, after above 2000 Years Discord between the Two Nations, varies as little from the Other, as any *Classic* Author in less tract of Time has disagreed from it self, by the unavoidable Slips and Mistakes of so many Transcribers. And now does not our Author come off victoriously with his *Rabbi's* of *Sichem*?

Well, but the * *Samaritans* have a *Chronicon*, or *History* of themselves from *Moses's* time, which is lodg'd in the public Library at *Leyden*, and has never been printed: and this is quite different from That contain'd in the *Historical Books* of the *Old Testament*. Here's now a sly Insinuation of some great Discoveries to be made out of this Book. And yet the mighty Matter is no more than this. *Joseph Scaliger* above a Hundred years ago procured this Book from *Sichem*, and left It among others by his Will to the Library at *Leyden*. There it's name has long appear'd in the Printed Catalogue; it has been transcrib'd more than once, and one Copy, formerly *Professor Golius's*, has fal'n into the Hands of my Learned Friend *Mr. Reland* at *Utrecht*: whereof take his own Account. 'Tis call'd *The Book of Joshua*, but its Author is not named; 'tis written in *Arabic*; since *Mahomet's* time most certainly, but how much since, is not known: it pretends to be a Translation from the *Hebrew*, but it's only its own Voucher; there being no Fame now remaining of any such Original. It consists of about 1 Chapters; xxxix of which make the sole Story of *Joshua*; six Chapters more

reach as low as *Nebuchadnezzar*; the very next comes to *Alexander* the Great, and his *Travels thorow the Air*; the next makes a long stride to the Emperor *Hadrian*; and Two more to the time of *Alexander Severus*. This is the Noble *Chronicle*, that our judicious *Free-thinker* would place above the Bible; when the very *Sichemites* do not place it so high, as his own Jargon *Half-Canonical*. 'Tis pity a man of so fine a Taste, and the *Maecenas* of the new Club, (since he hints with such concern, that *it is not yet publish'd*) should not be oblig'd at his own Charge to get it translated and printed. *Now! Mr. G!*

XXVIII.

The very View of the following Pages fills me with Disdain, to see such common Stuff brought in with an Air of Importance. **Hebrew and Septuagint; Gospels according to the Hebrews and Egyptians: The Traditions of Matthias, and the Secrets of Peter: Apostolic Constitutions, and Gospel of James; and the different Notions of Priests concerning Inspiration.* And what of all these, or half a Hundred more, that my Learned and *Lutheran* Friend Dr. *Fabricius* has amass'd together? Has our Author a mind to read and *think* of them? Think *freely* and welcome: for I suppose that was the design my Friend had in the publication. Or is he rather at his old Play, that he'l regard no Scripture at all, till all Christians among themselves, and *Talapoins* with them, can agree? *Jubeas stultum esse libenter*: let him have licence to play the Fool; since he answers his own Argument, in the very words where he put's it. †*For, All, says he, who build their Religion on Books, must from the nature of things*

* Pag. 54. † Pag. 56.

vary about the Books themselves, their Copies, and their Inspiration. Here's now both the Poison and the Antidote in One. For if it's necessary *from the nature of things*, that men shall so differ in their Opinions; that Difference is no Argument *backwards* to prove the falseness of all those Books. Unless the man will prove *a priori*, that Revelation ought not, cannot, be communicated and convey'd to us in *Books*. Which when he performs; or finds out a better Method; it shall be allow'd to be the first Instance of *Science* or *Art*, that the *Growing Sect* has invented.

XXIX.

But, notwithstanding he has fore-answer'd *from the nature of things* all that he can say about *Different Interpretations*, yet he proceeds in xx tedious Pages to enumerate those Differences, which he ranges under xii Heads; and before them puts a long Preamble out of your Learned Bishop *Taylor*. That Prelate, it seems, has with great acuteness and eloquence display'd the Difficulties in acquiring a full and perfect knowledge of all the abstruse places of Scripture; affirming at the same time, That all the Necessaries to Salvation and Moral Duties are deliver'd there most clearly and openly. Well, and what does our wise Author gain from the Bishops Confession? Has not He himself gone a great deal further, and made * *all the Sciences and Arts*, every imaginable part of Knowledge, to be requisite *towards having a just notion of that miscellaneous Book, the Bible*? If it be so; what wonder is it (nay what Miracle were it otherwise) that in an allow'd Freedom of *Thinking* and *Printing* your *English* Divines

* Pag. 11.

should have different Opinions? nay that the self-same Man by advances in Age and by progress in Study should differ from Himself? I have run over the Citations here out of *Taylor*; and find scarce one of those Difficulties so peculiar to Scripture, as not to be common to other Authors: to know which with exactness, as becomes every Writer (especially a declar'd Adversary to a whole Order professing Learning) is no easy and perfunctory matter: as our Author to his shame and sorrow may hereafter find and feel.

His XII Heads of Difference he has dispos'd in this order: *The Nature and Essence of the Divine Trinity, The Importance of that Article of Faith, The Specific Body at the Resurrection, Predestination, Eternal Torments, Sabbath or Lord's-Day, Episcopacy, Original Sin, Our Saviour's Human Soul, Lay-Baptism, Usury, and the Power of the Civil Magistrate in matters Ecclesiastical.* About all these Points and several others He could name, some of Your *English* Divines, it seems, for want of good Conduct have had Contests and Disputes: A most surprising piece of News! to You, as if none had heard of those Books till this Discovery; and to Us, as if We were intirely free from the like Disputations.

Now what would our Author have here? Is he angry, that All cannot agree? or will he make himself the Arbitrator? If he'll be *Umpire* in all these Questions; he has full Liberty of *Thinking*; the Path is beaten before him; he may chuse what Side he inclines to, or coin new Notions of his own. As Your Church has not yet anathematiz'd nor censur'd any of these Divines; so He needs not turn Atheist on these accounts, to purchase the right of *Free-thinking*.

But if he's *angry* that All agree not, and thinks
H it

it a Disgrace to Religion; or resolves to meddle with None of them, till All are unanimous: he must be put in mind of what he lately mention'd, *The Nature of Things*. For if he *forbids* Thinking on *abstruse* Questions, he contradicts his whole Book, which asserts Men's Right and Title *to think de quolibet ente*: but if he *allows* them to think on them; diversity of Opinions will necessarily follow *from the Nature of the Things*. For how can men keep the same Tract, where all walk in the Dark? Or how can they agree in one Story, where all tell their own Dreams? If Men needs will be prying into the hidden Mysteries of Heaven; they'l certainly court a Cloud instead of a Goddess: yet such Discoverers and Projectors there ever will be; and in *Divinity*, as well as *Geometry*, we have *Squarers of the Circle*.

XXX.

A second Instance of Your *English* Clergy's bad Conduct, is their owning * *the Doctrines of the Church to be contradictory to one another and to Reason*; a II^d their owning † *Abuses, Defects, and False Doctrines in the Church*; a IVth their professing ¶ *That they will not tell the Truth*; a Vth their * *charging the most judicious Men of their own Order with Atheism, Deism, or Socinianism*. Now as these Accusations reach no further than some Particulars among You; Our Church here is not in the least, and Yours (I think) is not much concern'd in them. If the Author really has not wrong'd them (as his usual Unfairness gives cause for Suspicion) it will be prudence in them to Learn even from an Enemy; and to speak hereafter with more caution and

* Pag. 76. † Pag. 79. ¶ Pag. 82. * Pag. 85.

i. e. if they must needs think freely, discretion.
at least they should speak freely.

discretion. All that a Stranger can do here, is to leave the Persons to their own proper Defense; and the suppos'd *Abuses and False Doctrines* in your Church, to your own either refuting the Charge, or remedying the Defect. For what would our *Lutherans* here say of Me; if I should pretend to maintain, that Your Church has no Blemish at all? though we justly esteem and honour it next to our Own.

XXXI.

But a VIth Instance of their ill Conduct, is their * *Rendring the Canon of the Scripture uncertain*. This is a heavy Charge indeed; and if they do not clear and vindicate themselves; We, as well as this Author, must call them to account. But what's the ground of the Indictment? *Why Dr. Grabe, Dr. Mill, with some others, affirm, that no Canon was made till above LX Years after the Death of Christ*. If this be all; he has verify'd the Sentence in the Comedy;

Homine imperito numquam quicquam injustu'st.

For pray, what's the Notion of the word *Canon*? An intire collection of the Sacred Writings, to be a *Rule, Standard, and System* to Christianity. Now according to those Doctors and the plain matter of Fact, all the Books of the New Testament were not *written* till the Year of Christ xcviⁱ, and That is, *above LX years after the Death of Christ*. What sense is there in this complaint then? that the Books were not collected before they were made? All the Books we now receive for Canonical were writ oc-

* *Pag. 68.*

casionally between the Years LII and xcvi. And during that Interval of xlv years; every Book, in the Places whither it was sent or where it was known, was immediatly as Sacred and Canonical, as ever it was after. Nor did the Church loiter and delay in making a Canon or Collection of them; for within Two years after the writing of St. *John's* Gospel the *Evangelical Canon* was fix'd. And within X after That, an *Epistolical Canon* was made: quick enough, if it be consider'd, that they were to be gather'd (whither they had been directed) from so many and so distant parts of the World. So that it's plain to me, this Collector of Scraps did not know what a *Canon* or Collection meant. I'll borrow his Argument for one minute, and try it upon some Classic Authors. It's very plain, that *Martial* publish'd every single Book of Epigrams by it self, One generally every year; only sometimes he delay'd two or three. And so *Horace* (as Your *Bentleius* has lately shown) set out his several Books occasionally, from the xxvi to the LI year of his Life. Now in the reasoning of our acute Writer, I'll prove several Books of those Two Authors to be *uncertain* and of dubious Authority. For what do you tell me of the First Book of the one's *Epigrams*, and of the other's *Satirs*? How do I know that those are genuine; when the *Canon* of *Martial* and *Horace* was not fix'd and settl'd, till above xx years after Those are pretended to be written? Is not this Argument most strong, cogent, and irrefragable? So very valuable and precious; that bear witness I now return it safe and sound to its Possessor and Author.

XXXII.

Yes! but poor Dr. MILL has still more to answer for: and meets with a sorry recompense for his long Labour of xxx years. For if we are to believe not only this wise Author, but a wiser Doctor of your own, He was * *labouring* all that while, to prove the Text of the Scripture precarious: having scrap'd together such an immense Collection of *Various Readings*, as amount in the whole by a late Author's computation, to above Thirty Thousand. Now this is a matter of some Consequence, and will well deserve a few Reflexions.

I am forc'd to confess with grief, That several well meaning Priests, of greater Zeal than Knowledge, have often by their own false Alarms and *Panic* both frightened others of their own side, and given advantage to their Enemies. What an uproar once was there, as if All were ruin'd and undone, when *Cappellus* wrote one Book against the Antiquity of the *Hebrew Points*, and Another for *Various Lections* in the Hebrew Text it self? And yet Time and Experience has cur'd them of those imaginary Fears: and the great Author in his Grave has now that Honour universally, which the Few only of his own age paid him, when alive.

The Case is and will be the same with Your Learned Country-man Dr. MILL; whose Friendship (while I staid at *Oxford*) and Memory will ever be dear to me. For what is it, that your WHITBYUS so inveighs and exclaims at? The Doctor's Labours, says he, make the whole Text precarious; and expose both the Reformation to the *Papists*, and Religion it self to the *Atheists*. God

* Pag. 88.

forbid!

forbid! we'll still hope better things. For surely those *Various Readings* existed before in the several Exemplars; Dr. *Mill* did not make and coin them, he only exhibited them to our View. If Religion therefore was true before, though such *Various Readings* were in-being: it will be as true and consequently as safe still, though every body sees them. Depend on't; no Truth, no matter of Fact fairly laid open, can ever subvert True Religion.

The 30000 *Various Lectons* are allow'd then and confess'd: and if more Copies yet are collated, the Sum will still mount higher. And what's the Inference from this? why, one *Gregory*, here quoted, infers, * *That no Profane Author whatever has suffer'd so much by the hand of Time, as the New Testament has done.* Now if this shall be found utterly false; and if the *Scriptural Text* has no more Variations, than what must necessarily have happen'd from the nature of Things, and what are common and in equal proportion in all Classics whatever; I hope this *Panic* will be remov'd, and the Text be thought as firm as before.

If there had been but One Manuscript of the *Greek Testament*, at the restoration of Learning about Two Centuries ago; then we had had no *Various Readings* at all. And would the Text be in a better condition then, than now we have 30000? So far from That; that in the best single Copy extant we should have had Hundreds of Faults, and some Omissions irreparable. Besides that the Suspicions of Fraud and Foul Play would have been increas'd immensely.

It is good therefore, you'll allow, to have more Anchors than One; and another *MS.* to join with the first would give more Authority, as well as Se-

* *Pag.* 88.

curacy. Now chuse that Second where you will, there shall be a Thousand Variations from the First; and yet Half or More of the Faults shall still remain in them Both.

A Third therefore, and so a Fourth, and still on, are desirable; that by a joint and mutual help All the Faults may be mended: some Copy preserving the True Reading in one place, and some in another. And yet the more Copies you call to assistance, the more do the Various Readings multiply upon you: every Copy having its peculiar slips, though in a principal Passage or two it do singular service. And this is Fact, not only in the New Testament, but in all Antient Books whatever.

'Tis a good Providence and a great Blessing, That so many Manuscripts of the New Testament are still amongst us; some procur'd from *Egypt*, others from *Asia*, others found in the *Western Churches*. For the very Distances of Places, as well as Numbers of the Books, demonstrate; that there could be no Collusion, no altering nor interpolating One Copy by another, nor All by any of them.

In Profane Authors (as they are call'd) whereof One Manuscript only had the luck to be preserv'd, as *Velleius Paterculus* among the *Latins*, and *Hesychius* among the *Greeks*; the Faults of the Scribes are found so numerous, and the Defects beyond all redress; that notwithstanding the Pains of the Learned'st and acute'st Critics for Two whole Centuries, those Books are still and are like to continue a mere Heap of Errors. On the contrary, where the Copies of any Author are numerous, though the *Various Readings* always increase in Proportion; there the Text by an accurate Collation of them made by skilful and judicious Hands is e-

ver the more correct, and comes nearer to the true words of the Author.

Were the very Originals of Antient Books still in being; those alone would supersede the use of all other Copies: but since That was impossible *from the nature of Things*, since Time and Casualties must consume and devour All; the subsidiary Help is from the various Transcripts convey'd down to us, when compar'd and examin'd together.

Terence is now in one of the best conditions of Any of the Classic Writers; the oldest and best Copy of him is now in the Vatican Library, which comes nearest to the Poet's own hand: but even That has Hundreds of Errors, most of which may be mended out of other Exemplars, that are otherwise more recent and of inferior value. I myself have collated several; and do affirm that I have seen 20000 Various Lecti^ons in that little Author, not near so big as the whole *New Testament*: and am morally sure, that if Half the number of Manuscripts were collated for *Terence* with that Niceness and Minuteness which has been used in Twice as many for the *New Testament*, the number of the *Variations* would amount to above 50000.

In the Manuscripts of the *New Testament* the Variations have been noted with a Religious, not to say Superstitious Exactness. Every difference in Spelling, in the smallest Particle or Article of Speech, in the very Order or Collocation of words without real change, has been studiously registred. Nor has the Text only been ransack'd, but all the Antient Versions, the *Latin Vulgate*, *Italic*, *Syriac*, *Aethiopic*, *Arabic*, *Coptic*, *Armenian*, *Gothic*, and *Saxon*; nor these only, but all the dispers'd Citations of the *Greek* and *Latin* Fathers in a course of 500 years. What wonder

der then, if with all this scrupulous search in every hole and corner, the Varieties rise to 30000? when in all Antient Books of the same Bulk, whereof the MSS are numerous, the Variations are as many or more; and yet no Versions to swell the Reckoning.

The Editors of Profane Authors do not use to trouble their Readers, or risk their own Reputation, by an useless List of every small slip committed by a lazy or ignorant Scribe. What is thought commendable in an Edition of Scripture, and has the name of Fairness and Fidelity, would in Them be deem'd Impertinence and Trifling. Hence the Reader not vers'd in antient MSS is deceiv'd into an Opinion, that there were no more Variations in the Copies, than what the Editor has communicated. Whereas, if the like scrupulousness was observ'd in registering the smallest Changes in Profane Authors, as is allow'd, nay requir'd in Sacred; the now formidable number of 30000 would appear a very Trifle.

'Tis manifest, that Books in Verse are not near so obnoxious to Variations, as Prose: the Transcriber, if he is not wholly ignorant and stupid, being guided by the Measures; and hindred from such Alterations, as do not fall in with the Laws of Numbers. And yet even in Poets, the Variations are so very many, as can hardly be conceiv'd without use and experience. In the late Edition of *Tibullus*, by the Learned Mr. *Broukhuis*, you have a Register of *Various Lectiōs* in the close of that Book; where you may see at the first View that they are as many as the Lines. The same is visible in *Plautus*, set out by *Pareus*. I my self, during my Travels, have had the opportunity to examin several MSS of the Poet *Manilius*; and can assure

you, that the Variations I have met with are twice as many as all the Lines of the Book. Our Discourser here has quoted Nine Verses out of it, p. 151: in which, though one of the easiest Places, I can shew him *xiv* Various Lecti^ons. Add likewise that the MSS here used were Few in comparison: and then do You imagin, what the Lecti^ons would amount to, if Ten times as many (the Case of Dr. Mill) were accurately examin'd. And yet in these and all other Books, the Text is not made more *precarious* on that account, but more certain and authentic. So that if I may advise you; when you here more of this Scarecrow of 30000, be neither astonish'd at the Sum, nor in any pain for the Text.

'Tis plain to Me, that your Learned *Whitby*, in his Invective against my Dead Friend, was suddenly surpriz'd with a *Panic*; and under his deep concern for the *Text* did not reflect at all what that Word really means. The present Text was first settled almost 200 years ago out of several MSS by *Robert Stephens* a Printer and Bookseller at *Paris*: whose beautiful and (generally speaking) accurate Edition has been ever since counted the Standard, and follow'd by all the rest. Now this specific *Text* in your Doctor's Notion seems taken for the Sacred Original in every Word and Syllable: and if the Conceit is but spread and propagated, within a few Years that *Printer's* Infallibility will be as zealously maintain'd as an *Evangelist's* or *Apostle's*.

Dr. MILL, were he alive, would confess to Your Doctor, That this *Text* fix'd by a Printer is sometimes by the Various Readings render'd *uncertain*, nay is prov'd certainly wrong. But then he would subjoin, That the Real Text of the Sacred Writers does not now (since the Originals have been so long
lost)

lost) ly in any single MS or Edition; but is dispers'd in them all. 'Tis competently exact indeed, even in the worst MS now extant: nor is One Article of Faith or Moral Precept either perverted or lost in them; chuse as awkwardly as you can, chuse the worst by design, out of the whole Lump of Readings. But the lesser matters of Diction, and among several synonymous Expressions the Very Words of the Writer, must be found out by the same Industry and Sagacity that is used in other Books; must not be risk'd upon the credit of any particular MS or Edition, but be sought, acknowledged, and challeng'd, where-ever they are met with.

Stephens follow'd what he found in the King of France's Copies, Acts xxvii, 14. "Ανεμος Τυφωνικός, ὁ καλέμενος ΕΥΡΟΚΛΥΔΩΝ: and He is follow'd by Your Translators, *There arose against it a tempestuous Wind, called EUROCLYDON.* This Reading perhaps your Learned Doctor would not have now be made *precarious*: but if that Printer had had the use of Your *Alexandrian* MS, which exhibits here ΕΥΡΑΚΥΛΩΝ; it's very likely he would have given it the Preference in his Text: and then the Doctor upon his own Principle must have stickled for This.

The Wind *Euroclydon* was never heard of but here: it's compounded of *εὖρος* and *κλύδων*, the *Wind* and the *Waves*; and it seems plain *a priori* from the disparity of those two Ideas, that they could not be join'd in one Compound: nor is there any other example of the like Composition.

But *Ευρακύλων*, or as the Vulgar *Latin* here has it, *Euroaquilo* (approv'd by *Grotius* and others) is so apposite to the Context, and to all the Circumstances

of the Place; that it may fairly challenge admittance, as the word of *St. Luke*. 'Tis true, according to *Varronius*, *Seneca*, and *Pliny*, who make *Eurus* to blow from the Winter Solstice, and *Aquilo* between the Summer Solstice and the North Point; there can be no such Wind nor Word as *Euroaquilo*: because the *Solanus* or *Apphelotes* from the Cardinal Point of East comes between them. But *Eurus* is here to be taken, as *Gellius* (II, 22.) and the *Latin* Poets use it, for the middle Aequinoctial East, the same as *Solanus*: and then in the Table of XII Winds according to the Antients, between the two Cardinal Winds *Septentrio* and *Eurus*, there are two at stated distances *Aquilo* and *Καικίας*. The *Latins* had no known name for *Καικίας*: *Quem ab oriente solstitiali excitatum Graeci Καικίαν vocant, apud nos sine nomine est*: says *Seneca Nat. Quaest. V, 16*. *Καικίας* therefore blowing between *Aquilo* and *Eurus*; the Roman Seamen (for want of a specific word) might express the same Wind by the compound name *Euroaquilo*; in the same Analogy as the Greeks call *Εὐρόνοτος* the middle Wind between *Eurus* and *Notus*, and as we say now *South East*, and *North East*. Since therefore we have now found that *Euroaquilo* was the *Roman* Mariner's word for the Greek *Καικίας*; there will soon appear a just reason, why *St. Luke* calls it *ἀνεμος τυφωνικός*, a tempestuous Wind, *vorticofus*, a whirling Wind: for that's the peculiar character of *Καικίας* in those Climates; as appears from several Authors and from that known Proverbial Verse,

Ἐλκων ἐφ' αὐτὸν ὡς ὁ Καικίας νέφη.

So that with submission, I think our *Luther's* and the *Danish* Version have done more right, than Your

English,

English, to the Sacred Text, by translating it *NORD-OST*, *North East*; though according to the present Compass divided into xxxii, *Euroaquilo* answers nearest to *OST NORD OST*, *East North East*; which is the very Wind that would directly drive the Ship from *Crete* to the *African Syrtis*, according to the Pilots Fears, in the 17 verse.

The *Alexandrian* Copy then, though it has vastly increas'd the number of Readings, as you see in Your *Polyglott* and Dr. *Mill's* Edition, has been of excellent use here; and so in many other places: retrieving to us the true Original, where other Copies fail'd. And what damage, if all the other Copies of near the same Antiquity, which Mr. *Montfaucon* has discover'd and Dr. *Mill* never saw, were sometime collated as exactly, and all the Varieties publish'd; let the Thousands grow never so many?

When the Doctor is so alarm'd at the vast Sum of 30000; he seems to take it for granted, that within that number the very Original is every where found; and the only complaint is, that True are so blended with False, that they can hardly be discover'd. If that were the only difficulty; some abler Heads than Ours would soon find a remedy: in the mean time I can assure him, that if That be the Case, the *New Testament* has suffer'd less injury by the hand of Time than any Profane Author; there being not One Antient Book besides it in the World, that with all the help of Various Lectiōs (be they 50000 if you will) does not stand in further want of emendation by true Critic: nor is there one good Edition of Any, that has not inserted into the Text (though every Reader knows it not) what no Manuscript vouches.

'Tis plain indeed, that if Emendations are true, they must have once been in some Manuscripts;

at

at least in the Author's Original: but it does not follow, that because no Manuscript now exhibits them, none more antient ever did. Slips and Errors (while the Art of Printing was unknown) grew presently and apace; even while the Author was alive. *Martial* tells us himself, how one of his Admirers was so curious, that he sent a Copy of his Poems which he had bought, to be * *emended* by his own hand. And we certainly know from † *Gellius*, that even so early as *Hadrian's* time and before, the common Copies of *Virgil* had several mistakes.

Not frightened therefore with the present 30000, I for my part, and (as I believe) many others would not lament, if out of the Old Manuscripts yet untouch'd 10000 more were faithfully collected: some of which without question would render the Text more beautiful, just, and exact; though of no consequence to the main of Religion, nay perhaps wholly Synonymous in the view of Common Readers, and quite insensible in any modern Version.

If all those remaining Manuscripts were diligently perus'd; perhaps one might find in some or one of them a new Various Lction in 1 *Tim.* vi, 3. Εἴ τις ἐπεροδιδασκαλεῖ, καὶ μὴ ΠΡΟΣΕΡΧΕΤΑΙ ὑγιαίνοντι λόγοις τοῖς ᾧ κυρίῃς ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. For though the Sense of Προσερχεῖ is so fix'd by the adjacent words, that no Version has mistaken it, consents not to, acquiesces not in, the wholsom words of our Saviour: yet the Propriety does not appear in the Original, no example of that Phrase having yet been given. If some Manuscript then should have it Προσεχεῖ or Προσίχεῖ, cleave and adhere to the wholsome words; who has reason to be angry at that

* *Martial* vii, 10. † *Gellius* i, 21. ix, 14.

Variation? But I should sooner expect to find ΠΡΟΣΕΧΕΙ; because προσέχειν λόγοις *to give heed, attend, observe, listen, obey*, is a known Phrase as well in Sacred as Profane Authors. So II Peter 1, 19. ὃ λόγῳ καλῶς προσέχοντες. *Proverb. 1, 24. Ἐξέτεινον λόγους, καὶ ἐπροσείχετε. Jerem. vi, 19. Τοῖς λόγοις μὲ ἐπροσεχόν.* So in other places of the LXX, Προσέχειν ῥήσει, ῥήμασι, νόμῳ, ἐντολαῖς. So to the same effect Act. viii, 6. προσέχειν τοῖς λεγομένοις. xvi, 14. τοῖς λαλομένοις. Heb. 1, 1. τοῖς ἀκροθῆϊσι. Tit. 1, 14. μύθοις. And lastly its join'd with the same word ἐπεροδιδασκαλεῖν, 1 Tim. 1, 4. Μὴ ἐπεροδιδασκαλεῖν, μηδὲ ΠΡΟΣΕΧΕΙΝ μύθοις καὶ γενεαλογίαις. If a search therefore was made in the Manuscripts abroad, and this Lektion should chance to be found there; what detriment would it bring either to the Authority or Beauty of the Text?

In the Epistle of Jude v. 18, the general sense is clear and palpable; *Mockers in the last time, χτ' τοὺς ἑαυτῶν ὀπιθυμίας πορευόμενοι τῶν ἀσεβειῶν, who walk after their own ungodly lusts.* But if one of those Manuscripts instead of ἀσεβειῶν should exhibit ΑΣΕΛΓΕΙΩΝ, *lascivious, wanton, filthy Lusts*: as those Two words are join'd 1 Pet. iv, 3. πεπορευμένοι ἐν ἀσελγείαις, ὀπιθυμίας, *who walked in Lasciviousness and Lusts*; and II Pet. ii, 18. ἐν ὀπιθυμίας σαρκὸς, ἀσελγείαις, *The Lusts of the flesh and Wantonness*: though the Sense of both may perhaps be equivalent, yet it's not Nothing, to add a justness and propriety of Expression.

Once more; in a Passage of St. James V, 6; where after he had denounc'd wrath and judgment against the Rich and Proud, he thus concludes, Κα-
τεδικάσθητε,

τεδικάζετε, ἐφονεύσατε τὸ δίκαιον. Ὁκ ἀντιτάσσεται ὑμῖν, *You have condemned and kill'd the just: he doth not resist you: if instead of ΟΥΚ some Manuscript by the change of one Letter should represent ΟΚΣ, which in the Antient Books is always so abbreviated for Ο Κύριε, the Lord: some Persons would not be sorry, if what has hitherto appear'd to all Interpreters abrupt, incoherent, and forc'd, should with so slight a change be made pertinent and proper: The LORD resists, opposes, sets himself against you. For so St. James speaks before, IV, 6; and St. Peter I Epist. V, 5. out of Prov. III, 34. Ο ΘΕΟΣ ὑπερηφάνοις ἀνιτάσσει, GOD opposeth the proud. And then the Connexion is apt and just in the following verse; Μακροθυμήσατε ΟΥΝ, Be patient THEREFORE, brethren, unto the coming ὁ ΚΥ of the LORD: exactly as St. Peter's is in the place already cited: For GOD resisteth the proud: Humble yourselves THEREFORE under the mighty hand of GOD.*

But to return to our Discourser, and to close up this long *Remark*; it is Fact undeniable, that the Sacred Books have suffer'd *no more alterations than Common and Classic Authors*: it has been the common Sense of Men of Letters, that numbers of Manuscripts do not make a Text *precarious*, but are useful nay necessary to its Establishment and Certainty. And as *Scaliger, Casaubon, Heinsius, &c.* when they design'd to publish a correct Edition of an Author, first labor'd to procure all the Manuscripts they could hear of, as the only means that promis'd laudable success: So *Stephanus, Junius, Circellæus, Walton, Fell, and Mill* proceeded in the same method. All these, except *Stephens* the Printer, were *Christian Priests*: and what, pray, were they

they doing, with all this pains and labour? Why, according to our wise Author, they were confounding their own Scheme. Very magisterial and decisive! And yet the comfort is, That in his courteous distribution of all Mankind, into *Knaves* and *Fools*, he can neither accuse the *Clergy* here as playing their *Priest-craft*; nor without involving with them the most Learned of the *Layety* turn them over to his second Row of *Crackbrain'd* and *Idiots*.

The Result of the whole is, That either *a posteriori* all Antient Books, as well as the Sacred, must now be laid aside as *uncertain and precarious*; or else to say *a priori*, That all the Transcripts of Sacred Books should have been privileg'd against the common Fate, and exempted from all Slips and Errors whatever. Which of these our Writer and his *new Sect* will close with, I cannot foresee: there's in each of them such a gust of the *Paradox* and *Perverse*, that they equally suit with a modern *Free-thinkers* palate: and therefore I shall here bestow a short reflexion on Both.

If all the old Authors are abandon'd by him; there is One compendious Answer to this *Discourse of Free-thinking*. For what becomes of his boasted Passages out of *Cicero*, *Plutarch*, and his long List of antient *Free-thinkers*, if the *Text* of each is *precarious*? those Passages, as they came from the Author's hands, might be for Superstition, which are now cited against it. Thus our Writer will be found *Felo de se*; unless the Coroner to save his Effects favours him with his own Titles of *Fool* and *Madman*.

But I have too much value for the Antients, to play booty about their Works and Monuments, for the sake of a short Answer to a fool according to his folly. All those Passages, and all the rest of their

Remains are sufficiently pure and genuine, to make us sure of the Writer's Design. If a corrupt Line or dubious Reading chances to intervene, it does not darken the whole Context, nor make an Author's Opinion or his Purpose *precarious*. Terence for instance, has as many Variations, as any Book whatever in proportion to its Bulk; and yet with all its Interpolations, Omissions, Additions, or Glosses (chuse the worst of them on purpose) you cannot deface the Contrivance and Plot of one Play; no not of one single Scene; but its Sense, Design, and Subserviency to the last Issue and Conclusion, shall be visible and plain thorow all the Mist of *Various Lectiōns*. And so it is with the Sacred Text; make your 30000 as many more, if numbers of Copies can ever reach that Sum: all the better to a knowing and serious Reader, who is thereby more richly furnish'd to select what he sees Genuine. But even put them into the hands of a Knave or a Fool: and yet with the most sinistrous and absurd Choice, he shall not extinguish the Light of any one Chapter; nor so disguise Christianity, but that every Feature of it will still be the same.

And this has already prevented the last Shift and Objection; That Sacred Books at least, Books impos'd upon the World as Divine Laws and Revelations, should have been exempted from the injuries of Time, and secur'd from the least Change. For what need of that perpetual Miracle; if with all the present Changes, the whole Scripture is perfect and sufficient, to all the great Ends and purposes of its first Writing? what a Scheme would these men make? what worthy Rules would they prescribe to Providence? That in Millions of Copies transcrib'd in so many Ages and Nations, all the Notaries and Writers, who made it their Trade and Livelyhood, should

should be infallible and impeccable? That their Pens should spontaneously write true, or be supernaturally guided; though the Scribes were nodding or dreaming? would not this exceed all the Miracles of both Old and New Testament? And, pray, to what great Use or Design? To give satisfaction to a few obstinate and untractable Wretches; to those who are not convinc'd by *Moses and the Prophets*, but want *one from the Dead* to come and convert them. Such men mistake the methods of Providence, and the very fundamentals of Religion: which draws its Votaries by the *Cords of a Man*, by rational, ingenious, and moral Motives; not by conviction Mathematical; not by new evidence Miraculous, to silence every doubt and whim, that Impiety and Folly can suggest. And yet all this would have no effect upon such Spirits and Dispositions: if they now believe not *Christ* and his *Apostles*; *neither would they believe*, if their own Schemes were comply'd with.

XXXIII.

But Dr. MILL is not yet dismiss'd: * *for he has discover'd a Passage very little known before*; with which this Author hopes, not *to do any good*, but a great deal of mischief. But why, I pray, *discover'd*? and why *very little known*? Has not the Passage been twice printed in *Victor* above a Hundred years? and a third time above half a Hundred? and over and over in *Isidorus's* Chronicon? We'll allow it was *very little known* to this Author and his Sect before: but let not them measure all Others by their own narrow and partial Inquiries.

Nay, but even *Father Simon*, * *who has labour'd so much to prove the uncertainty of the Text of Scri-*

* Pag. 90.

ture, did not light on this Passage. Our Writer has found out, you see, Father *Simon's* cover'd Design; a true piece of *Popish Priestcraft*, to confound the Reformation by labouring to prove the Sacred Text precarious: and this avow'd Enemy to all Priests and Priestcraft concurs openly with that Papist in his pious Intention. Now what shall we say or think of this Conduct? You that live upon the Spot, pray inquire into the Men. Was not one of the *Heads* of them a *Papist*, in the time of Your late King *James*? Such a Story goes here at *Leipfic*: and really a Stranger would be tempted to think, that *Popery* rather than *Atheism* is the secret Cabbala of this *new Sect*. For why such Zeal for bare *Atheism*, if nothing more was behind the Scene? There is no Principle, no Spur, in mere *Atheism*, to make any man act as They do. They confess, that the modern * *Free-thinkers are sure to be hated by 999 out of a 1000*. Why then must this universal Hatred be voluntarily incurr'd by an *Atheist*? Why must He expose himself by his Talking and Printing? To do *Himself* good? The very contrary: for if Your Priests were really such, as this Writer has describ'd them: his very Life would not be worth a Month's Purchase. Or to do *Others* good? Nothing less: for what Harm in his Scheme, if men live and dye *Christians*? He cannot tell them, they'l be *damn'd* for't after Death: He can only aim, if men *live* not wickedly enough already, to invite and encourage them to live worse. A mighty Friend this to *Himself*, and to Human Society.

But take now a mixture of *Popery* into the Scheme of this *new Sect*, and all their odd Steps may be accounted for. 'Tis most certain in Fact, That to propagate *Atheism* in Protestant Countries has been

* Pag. 120.

a Method prescrib'd and made use of by Popish Emissaries. For they do no *evil* by it in Their Notion ; the Men that would have been damn'd for *Heresy*, are no worse damn'd for *Atheism* : but the *good* of the thing lies open to full view ; when Infidelity and an Indifference to All Religion (and Some there must and ever will be) must needs pave a plain way for the return of Popery ; while Zealand Flame are all on one side, and Coldness and mere Ice on the other. Let these Authors look to it then ; and let your Government look to Them. They may take their Option of One of their own Epithets : if *Popery* is the drift of their Sect, (as they really serve its Interests) they may claim favour to be plac'd among the *Designing and Artificial Knaves* ; but if naked *Atheism* is all they aim at, they are certainly turn'd over without *Benefit of Clergy* to the *Crazy, Crackbrain'd, and Idiots*.

And now for the Passage in *Victor's Chronicon*, with our Author's faithful Translation :

MESSALLA V. C. Coff. Constantinopoli, jubente Anastasio Imperatore, Sancta Evangelia, tamquam ab idiotis Evangelistis composita, reprehenduntur & emendantur.

In the Consulship of MESSALLA ; at the command of the Emperor ANASTASIUS, the Holy Gospels, as written by Idiot Evangelists, are corrected and amended.

Our Writer introduces this Passage with a triumphant Remark ; That it was done *in the VI Century*, and recorded by one who *flourish'd in that very Age*. Now this is to possess the unwary Reader ; that *Victor* reports this matter, as within his own knowledge and memory. But *Messalla* was *Consul* in the West *A. D. DVI* : and this little *Chronicon* of a dozen Pages, which might be written in as short time as my Letter here, ends *A. D. DLXVI*. So that This might be nothing but a Hear-say about

a business suppos'd to be done threescore years before.

Ab Idiotis Evangelistis, *By Idiot Evangelists*, says our Author; who, if he's sincere in this Version, proves himself a very *Idiot* in the *Greek* and *Latin* acceptation of that word. Ἰδιώτης, *Idiota*, *illiteratus*, *indoctus*, *rudis*. See *Du Fresne* in his *Glossaries*; who takes notice, that *Idiota* for an *Idiot* or *Natural Fool* is peculiar to your *English* Law; for which he cites *Rastal*. Did *Victor* therefore mean *Idiot Evangelists* in your *English* sense? No: but *illiterate*, *unlearned*. What then must we think of our Author for his scandalous Translation here? whether Imputation will he chuse to lye under; that he knew the meaning of *Victor*, or that he knew it not?

As for the Fact it self, * *a General Alteration of the iv Gospels in the vi Century*; though I have no high Opinion of our Author's Penetration, I dare venture to say, He himself does not believe it. Dr. MILL has taught him better; whose words he has honestly suppress'd here, He that makes it one Article against your Clergy, their † *Stifling of Passages, and mangling of Books*. ¶ 'Tis as certain, says the Doctor, as certain can be; that no such alter'd Gospels were ever made public. What Tumults, what Tragedies would they have rais'd? They would have cost that hated Emperor his Crown and his Life. The Fact would have been spoken of and detested by All the Historians, and not be found only (as it is: for *Isidore* professes to take it from *Victor*) in one blind passage of a puny Chronicle.

Add to these Reasons of my Dead Friend; that we have plain demonstration, no such *Alter'd Gospels* obtain'd in the World: as this Writer would insinuate. For we have the Fathers of iv whole Centuries before that time, both in the *Greek* and *Latin*

* Pag. 90. † Pag. 95, 96. ¶ Millij Proleg. p. 98.

Church; among All whom there's scarce a Verse in the New Testament uncited: the Agreement of which with the *MSS* yet extant does fully evince, that the Copies continu'd the same after *Anastasius's* time as before. Add the intire Commentaries of *Austin*, *Jerom*, *Chrysostom*, *Cyrril*, *Theodoret*, and more, all dead before the VI Century commenc'd: and yet Their *Text* is the same as now; and their Explications so confirm and fix it, that That could not be alter'd in Their Books (as is suppos'd in the naked Scripture) without making the Commentaries anew. Add again the Latin *Italic* and *Jerom's* Versions, add others in the East, all before the date of this pretended *general Alteration*: and he must be a mere *Idiot* indeed, that can believe that Story; when he sees all those antecedent Books so exactly agree with the subsequnt.

That this *General Alteration* is a mere Dream and *Chimera*, may be known even *a priori* by any man of Common Sense. For if the thing was really effected, and the very Bibles of *Victor* and *Isidore* (with all the rest) were so alter'd and corrupted beyond retrieve; what could those men mean, to transmit that Fact to Posterity? Or what Copyer would not have *sifted those Passages* in them both? Suppose, in our *Free-thinker's* Scheme, that all the World at that time were *Knaves* and *Fools* enough to comply with it: yet surely they would not have told Us it; they would not have branded Themselves to all Ages; not so abus'd the *Evangelists*, whom they look'd on as Inspir'd; not root up and *destroy* that Religion, which this very pretended Fact design'd to *recommend*.

Our modest Writer, who affirms of himself,
 * That he M U S T be one of the most Understanding

* Pag. 120.

and

and *Virtuous Men alive*, has given no good Instance of Either in his management of this Passage: for he has left out a Principal word, both in his *Latin* and *English*, and which *MILL* as well as *Victor* lay'd before his eyes; that will clear up this whole affair. *CONSTANTINOPOLI*, at *CONSTANTINOPLE*, says *Victor*, *the Gospels were amended*. Was this a *General Alteration*? Did this involve the whole Christian World? Would *Theodoric*, then reigning in the West, have submitted to this Order of *Anastasius*, a weak and unpopular Prince, that was scarce obey'd by his own Guards? But the Story it self pretends to no more, than the City of the Emperor's Residence: and if our Author did not see this, where was his *Understanding*? if he did, and *stifled* the word by design, where was his *Virtue*?

You see, the matter dwindles to nothing; even allowing the whole Fact in *Victor's* meaning to be true. But I can never believe so wicked and senseless a Thought, of that Emperor or any Christian whatever. He was hated indeed universally, for adhering to Heretic's, and for his ill conduct in Civil Government: and so any Story was entertain'd with Joy, that would make him still more odious, and blacken his Character. But I fancy, I can give you a clear account of the occasion and rise of this Scandal; out of *Liberatus* the Deacon, of the same Age and Country with *Victor*, in the XIX Ch. of his *Breviarium*.

Hoc tempore Macedonius Constantinopolitanus Episcopus ab Imperatore Anastasio dicitur expulsus, tamquam Evangelia falsasset, & maxime illud Apostoli dictum, *Qui apparuit in carne, justificatus est in Spiritu*. Hunc enim immutasse, ubi habet ΟΣ, id est QUI, monosyllabum Graecum; litera mutata Ο in Θ vertisse, & fecisse ΘΣ, id est ut esset,

DEUS

DEUS apparuit per carnem. Tamquam Nestorianus ergo culpatus expellitur per Severum Monachum.

The Editions of *Liberatus*, instead of Θ and ΘΣ, have Ω and ΩΣ: but it appears from *Baronius*, that the Manuscript had no Greek Letters here at all; and that They were supply'd by the first Editor. I have not scrupl'd therefore to correct the Place, as the *Latin* clearly requires; for DEUS answers to ΘΕΟΣ, and the Greek *Monosyllable* ΟΣ is in opposition to that *Disyllable*. And so *Hincmarus* in his *Opusculum* Chap. XVI II, where he recites the same Story (without doubt out of *Liberatus*) has it plainly, as I have put it, Ο in Θ vertit Θ fecit ΘΣ.

The Account is this: *Macedonius* Patriarch of *Constantinople* was charg'd by the Emperor *Anastasius* as a Falsary, that had alter'd and interpolated several passages of the New Testament in the Copies us'd in that City; and particularly that in the I Tim. III, 16. he had order'd ΘΣ to be written instead of ΟΣ: and for that crime of Falsification he was depriv'd and banish'd.

Macedonius might really do this; and where any Copies had it ΟΣ, he might order to correct it ΘΣ by a small stroke of the Pen. That the Copies did vary here of old is most certain: and there's one in the *Colbertin* Library, that has it ΟΣ at this day. But 'tis as certain, that *Macedonius* was not the first Introducer of that Reading: many Antient Fathers citing and explaining it ΘΣ, before He was born.

Now any Reader (I presume) even our Author himself will grant me; That if *Macedonius* was banish'd for falsifying those Copies; *Anastasius* would give Orders, to have the true Readings (in his O-

pinion)restor'd; and that all the Copies in *Constantinople* should be sought for and amended.

And here, if I mistake not, is the whole Ground and Rise of the Story in *Victor*. For the true Fact being no more than this, That *Anastasius* order'd the Copies to be amended, Tamquam ab Idiotis Librariis conscripta, as written by ignorant Scribes; the Story grew in the Telling, when it was got as far as *Afric*, on purpose to blacken him, That he order'd the Originals to be amended, Tamquam ab idiotis Evangelistis composita, as made by ignorant Evangelists.

It does not lessen the Probability of this, That *Victor* speaks only of *Evangelia*, the Gospels: for that's the word both in *Liberatus* and *Hincmare*, EVANGELIA falsasset, even where they specify the Epistle to *Timothy*. So that Gospels, in the common acceptation of those times, were meant of the whole *New Testament*.

But I think, the Probability is much increas'd, by this obvious reflexion; that no One Author tells both these Stories: *Victor*, who has transmitted down the greater Reproach, says not a word of the less: and *Liberatus*, who has publish'd the Fairer Story, is silent about the Blasphemous one. So that in their first Original, they were but One and the Same.

T A N T U M.

Honour'd Sir,

YOU will see all along in my Letter, without my telling it now, that I design'd to have dispatch'd at once all my Observations upon this famous Treatise. But finding my self here in His xc page, the very Middle of the Book; and my Remarks having so grown under my hands, that they are already full heavy enough for the Post: I chuse to make up this present Packet, and leave the rest to another Occasion. I my self am of opinion, that this Half is as much as the Whole: the Author's Virtues and Abilities, his Honesty and his Learning, are made already as apparent, as even a Second Letter can make them: for his whole *Discourse* is but one uniform Series of Insincerity and Ignorance, of Juggle and Blunder. However, if I understand, that This Letter has come safe to your Hands, and that Another would be serviceable to Religion, or acceptable to the *English Clergy*, for whose Honour though a Foreigner I have the greatest regard; You may certainly command

Your most obedient

Leipfic Jan. 26.
New Stile.

humble Servant

PHILELEUTHERUS LIPSIENSIS.

E R R A T A.

Pag. 20. Read Nullam. p. 21. lin. 1. *filliest*. p. 41. l. 14. *Imperium*. p. 48. l. 26. Saviour. p. 53. l. 23. he does. p. 70. l. 29. *Kaxilas*.

1. The first of these is the fact that the system is not a simple one. It is a complex system, and the results of the experiments are not always as expected. This is due to the fact that the system is not a simple one, and the results of the experiments are not always as expected.

REFLEXIONS

ON AN

Anonymous Pamphlet,

Entituled, a DISCOURSE of

FREE THINKING.

By WILLIAM WHISTON, M.A.

—Pudet hæc opprobria nobis
Et dici potuisse, & non potuisse refelli.

Perlegi Feb. 49.
Not The Second Edition. [initials]

L O N D O N :

Printed for the AUTHOR, in Cross-street,
Hatton-garden; and sold by A. BALDWIN,
near the Oxford-Arms in Warwick-lane. 1713.

ence, than against Christianity it self, with it's sacred Books; yet do I perceive there are everywhere such ill Characters given of the Clergy or Christian Priesthood in general, and such oblique Reproaches cast upon reveal'd Religion, such a visible Slight put upon the whole Jewish Nation, and the Mosaick Law; such a plain Disregard of the great Foundation of Religion, the Immortality of the Soul; and such Insinuations visibly tending to render the sacred Books both Jewish and Christian, contemptible and uncertain; that 'tis very fit and reasonable to make some Reply to it. And since I am fully my self persuaded of the Truth of the Christian Religion, and of the Authority of the Holy Scriptures, and this upon a through Examination; and equally satisfied, that what is here said in derogation to them, is not only weak and foreign, and ill grounded, but commonly the result of the very same inaccuracy, partiality, and false reasoning, if not direct prevarication also, which is so violently here complained of in others; I think it not improper for me, to make a few *Reflexions* upon this Pamphlet, and to endeavour to prevent some part at least of that Mischief, which it is otherwise capable of doing with the unthinking and prejudic'd part of Mankind: I say with the *unthinking and prejudic'd part of Mankind* only; for I am in no Concern for the truly Sober, the Learned and Judicious; who I am sure will make deeper Enquiries and solider Reflexions ere they make such Conclusions, about matters of such mighty Consequence. And then because I am my self several times mention'd therein; because I am not engag'd in any modern Party, and no way byass'd by any modern Authorities; because I have long

long made reveal'd Religion the matter of my Studies, and have therein light on several Observations not commonly known, which will be of great Advantage in the present Case; because I shall not, I hope, be suspected of Prevarication and Priestcraft, on account of my present Conduct and Circumstances, no way rendering me obnoxious to such a Censure, I do the more willingly undertake this Trouble.

Now the Reflexions I would make upon this Pamphlet are these:

(1.) That 'tis all to no valuable purpose, and serves to no good End: It neither promotes Men's Happiness in this, nor in another World: It tends to no real Amendment of what is amiss in the Church; nor proposes the least means of healing it's Breaches, or recovering it's Purity; nor would introduce any better Religion, instead of the Christian: It seems rather to look on the Abuses, and Vices, and Disorders of Churchmen, as matter for Sport, Censure, and Amusement. Accordingly the Author freely owns, that he [†] wrote *purely to comply with a Friends Request, without the least Hopes of doing any good.* A Declaration not very agreeable to the Temper of a good Man; who is not generally willing to do what he shall judge will turn to no account in the World.

(2.) That the main part of the Book proves what will not be deny'd, at least by such as the Author expects will chiefly read it; I mean that Men must one way or other *Examine* things, and act upon the Evidence that arises from such Examination. This the Author may be sure will be agreed to by

me, and by all that have any Degree of Honesty and Impartiality : Nay we shall agree that if the King of * *Siam* should, as he puts the Case, send his Priests or *Talapoins*, in order to our Conversion to his Religion, they ought to be civilly treated and fairly heard : nor would the Christian Religion be in the least in danger if all other Pagan or Turkish Missionaries were alike heard, and reasoned with on that Occasion. Nay indeed Examination in a full and through manner, is what I take to be the great Duty of this Author in particular, and the slightness it here appears to have been done with, I take to be his great Fault, and the grand Occasion of my present Reflexions. It being impossible that a Person who had made a fair and full Examination into the most important Concerns of Religion, could ever persuade himself to write about it, in such a vain, loose, trifling, and ludicrous manner as is here done ; and as indeed is commonly done, by the present Enemies of Christianity. All Men have a right to be heard, when they talk seriously, soberly, gravely, and with an honest Mind : but no Man has a right to trifle, or be knowingly impertinent ; and least of all in the Business of Religion. I wish therefore that all the Unbelievers were openly allow'd and invited, to produce their real Arguments, substantial Objections, and considerable Doubts, without Molestation ; as being persuaded they are capable of satisfactory Answers and Solutions : but I cannot think they or anybody are to jest, to banter, or to be ridiculous about it : which method yet is the main Strength of their Cause ; whereby they make the deepest Impression on the unthinking and unserious, that

is on the greatest part of Mankind. However, all this general arguing for *free thinking* or *fair examination*, which takes up above half the Pamphlet, signifies not much here, because the proper Rules and Measures of such *Thinking* or *Examination*, and the Nature and Character of compleat Evidence, where alone the Difficulty of the Case lies, is left wholly untouch'd and undetermin'd by this Author. This makes the whole look very awkward and unprofitable. Suppose a Merchant should discourse at large to his Friend, how much it behoves him to be a Gainer by Trading, and not a Loser; without the least Direction how he may deal to Advantage: such an Harangue would, I doubt, be of little use to him. Nor is the Method here taken, of much greater Advantage to the Instruction of Mankind.

(3.) We find here a great number of Passages, that are of little real Consequence at all in themselves, but seem rather put in for shew, and out of Humour, and Merriment, and Reproach than for any more useful Purposes. Such is that Reflexion on my Lord of * *Worcester's* Exposition of *Daniel's* Week having been in the Press above Ten Years: Which Exposition however I own I have formerly read, as far as it was then printed, and this with so great Pleasure and Satisfaction, that I am exceeding sorry any stoppage should have been made to its entire Publication: the short Result of which yet I have long since given the World upon † another Occasion. And I venture to say, the Evidence arising thence to the Truth of the Christian Religion, does much more encrease, than all the Exceptions made against it by

this and like Pamphlets, can weaken its Authority, with the impartial and judicious part of Mankind. * Such are the imposing or wicked Tricks of the Pawawers in *America*; † the idle Story of the Flames descending into the Holy Sepulchre on Easter Eve, with the flying of the Holy Ghost in the Shape of a Dove over the Cupola of its Church: || Such is the Tale of the three Pictures of St. George, and the Blessed Virgin, and another Saint's belaboring the Backs of those that carry them: ‡ Such is that of the Liquefaction of St. *Januarius's* Blood at *Naples*, and that of the Candle at *Arras*, brought from Heaven by the Virgin Mary; a hundred more of which this Author might have added out of the Legends, but which have no Relation to Christianity; any farther, than they are the Shame and Disgrace of those several Churches, which support or tolerate the same Delusions, contrary to the whole Tenor and Nature of the pure and original Gospel of Christ. Such is that vehement Wish, for sending several of our * Divines as Missionaries beyond Sea, whose Names are written with Dashes also, after the scandalous way of the News Papers of this Age: Such is the Introduction of Mr. *Carrol* and Mr. *Turner* and others, with the solemn Title of *Reverend*, so often repeated as if it were done by way of Banter: Such are several weak and unguarded Passages, pick'd out of many otherwise valuable Authors: as if this Writer had read them, only to weed the most injudicious things he could find in them: particularly about the Mysteriousness of the Scripture, the Trinity, Lay-baptism, Usury, Contradictions in Religion, Concealing the

Truth, Names of Reproach, and *Friendship*; concerning which last, 'tis amazing how Bishop *Taylor* should talk so weakly, as if the New Testament had no mention of it: when that *Love of the Brethren*, of which the Gospel is so full, was an higher Affection than any other Friendship whatsoever. * Such is the Answer of the New Jersey Proprietor, of that Island's having neither *Lawyers*, *Physitians*, nor *Priests*; and the Gentleman's Admiration of it's Happiness thereupon. † Such is *Julian's* Satyrical Sarcastm on *Constantine*; ‡ The pretended Dream about *Origen's* Damnation; and the ‡ idle Tale about *Synesius's* Note for Money in another World, and the like. If this Writer expects any particular Reply to such humourfom and ridiculous things, pick'd out rather for Shew and Merriment, than for Argument, he will certainly be disappointed.

(4.) There is here such an affected Use and Repetition of the word *Priest* upon all Occasions, and that, under all the odious Imputations possible, that no good Christian, especially no Bishop or Presbyter of the Christian Church, who are every one *Christian Priests*, but must be concern'd at it; as if the very Name or Office were criminal; and according to their famous Motto, *Priests of all Religions were the same*. Whereas Priests, among Christians, are properly no other than those sacred Officers, who are appointed by the Great High Priest *Jesus Christ*, to represent his Divine Priesthood here on Earth; to interpose between the Great God and sinful Men, in all the most important Offices of Religion; in Prayer, and Praise,

* pag. 108.

† pag. 118.

‡ pag. 162.

‡ pag.

in the Oblation of the Gifts and Free-will Offerings of the People to God, especially in the most solemn Eucharistical Sacrifice of Commemoration ; in admitting Persons duly qualified into, and excluding open Sinners out of the Church : in authoritatively blessing the People in the Name of God, and preaching his Word to them ; and in the like sacred Ministrations : not indeed with any Pretence to the least temporal Power, worldly Greatness, or secular Authority whatsoever : but yet with such a divine Commission from Christ, at least when they are elected and act according to his Laws, and not according to the Laws of Men, that the Publick Worship, the Celebration of Baptism, or of the Eucharist, with the Exercise of true Christian Discipline and Government, cannot duly and effectually be done without them. Accordingly I think it a great Honour, that I can still call my self a *Christian Priest* ; nor will a thousand such Reproachful Pamphlets as this make me at all ashamed of that Office or Appellation. Not that I will in the least justify or excuse any of that gross Ignorance, Folly, Prevarication, or Knavery, which in these latter Ages have too much prevail'd in the Church, and particularly in the Priests thereof ; as the Reader will see all along these Reflexions. Yet do I desire that the *Sacred Function* or *Office* it self may not be expos'd with those guilty Persons, that have too frequently been intrusted with it : Nor that the truly I earned, and Honest and Innocent, and Pious, and Charitable among the Bishops and Presbyters, (and God be thanked many such there are still left among them ; even, as I hope, in all the modern Churches,) may not be condemn'd with the rest. There have certainly been in

all Ages very many tyrannical Princes, unjust Judges, partial Magistrates, knavish Lawyers, careless and ignorant Physicians and cheating Trades-men : and yet will not any wise Man therefore fall a railing in general at all Princes, Judges, Magistrates, Lawyers, Physicians and Trades-men, and at their several Dignities and Employments. And I hope this Generation will live to see the *Christian Religion* and its *Priesthood* so reformed and restored to their original, pure, and undefiled State, that all their Enemies shall be sham'd of the least Attempts to reproach them. Nay I am willing to hope that some of these very Men, who now make it their Business to expose them both, shall be then so satisfied with their Excellency and Usefulness to Mankind, while all their temporal Power and Tyranny are gone, and they only and truly act by the Laws of the Gospel; as to resign themselves up so far to their spiritual Directions and Conduct, as to suffer themselves to be guided in the way of Salvation by them.

(5.) There is room for Suspicion that *Free-Thinking* is here often put for *Fair Examination*, on purpose, and with Design : as if all things were to be determin'd by *abstract Thoughts*, and *metaphysical Speculations*. And this is the more to be suspected; because many of late begin to talk against moral Evidence, ancient Testimonies, and matters of Fact, even in Points which can alone be known by those means ; as if they were conscious that that Method of Enquiry were too laborious, and too much against their Designs to be relish'd by them. They had rather determine presently by *Free Thinking* whether *Moses* led the *Children of Israel* through the Red Sea ; whether

gave the Law on Mount *Sinai* ; and whether Christ rose from the Dead, or ascended to Heaven ; than take the Pains to examin all the Testimonies and Monuments that relate to those Facts. They suppose it properer to snare you in a Paralogism about Necessity and Liberty, than appeal to the known Observations of all Men, and of themselves also, about the Freedom of human Actions ; which yet is a Question only to be decided by such Observation ; and which is thereby decided every Hour, to the Satisfaction of the Body of Mankind ; I mean of all but a few that are puzzled with metaphysical Subtilties ; those Cobwebs of Learning, and Foundations of Scepticism ; and by the By, I own I cannot but esteem one that is moved with metaphysick Arguments against Fact, Experience, and Testimony about such Matters, to be just as wise, as he that is persuaded by the Difficulties in the Communication of Motion, to deny there is any such thing as Motion in the World : or as he that is moved by the seeming Absurdities, in the abstract Notions about *matter* it self, and its original to disbelieve the reality of its Existence ; as Mr. *Berkly* in his *Principles of human Knowledge*, appears thence to have done. Nor have *Des Cartes*, Mr. *Serjeant*, Mr. *Carrol*, or others had much better Success in their parallel Speculations of that Nature. All which I observe the rather, to caution others from spending their Time and Thoughts on such vain Subtilties, and uncertain Amusements hereafter. But then, as to my present Reflexion, it is the more just and necessary here, because the whole of Revealed Religion is therein concern'd : It being as impossible to know by human Guesses, metaphysick Reasoning, or the *Freest Thinking*, what

what particular Laws it pleas'd God at any time
 to give the Jews or Christians, without Recourse
 to the original Testimonies and Records thereto
 relating, as it is so to determin the Laws of *Nu-*
ma, or of the twelve Tables at *Rome*. Nor is it
 more possible for us, without History, to know
 what Miracles it has pleas'd God to work for the
 Confirmation of either, than without it so to disco-
 ver what Wars the King of *Babylon* or *Persia* made
 above two thousand Years ago. And indeed
 there is the more Reason for Caution against this
 Fallacy, because the main Fact on which Christi-
 anity is built, I mean the Resurrection of our
Lord from the Dead, which has in so an unexcep-
tionable a manner been lately demonstrated by
Mr. Ditton, in order to the Conviction of these
Unbelievers, is still wholly waved ; and instead
 of any Reply to that excellent Discourse, an An-
 swer to which would be much more to the Pur-
 pose than all the Amusements in this and the
 like Books we are called to *Free Thinking* only, as
 a sure Resolver of all Doubts and Difficulties
 whatsoever. If this be supposed too hard an In-
 terpretation of the meaning of the Title and Lan-
 guage of this Book, I hope we shall be put off this
 way no more ; but that Mr. Ditton's noble Un-
dertaking will either be attempted to be answer'd,
as to that most important matter of Fact, or we
 shall hear no more of *Free-Thinking* in opposition
 to Religion. For I venture to say, that as vain
 as some of these *Free Thinkers* may appear, and as
 conceited as they may be of the Power of
 their own Thoughts or Imaginations, yet are
 there none of them (in their Wits) so vain or
 conceited as to own the matters of Fact in the
 Bible, or indeed that One, that our Saviour did
 really

{ really rise from the Dead, to be true, and yet to deny, or even doubt of the Truth of Christianity.

(6.) We have here such a high Character of the Bible, * *as a Collection of Tracts, given us at diverse Times by God himself; and that consequently every Thing therein mention'd, is handled with the utmost Degree of Exactness,* that one would imagin the Author had a higher Opinion of the Inspiration and Divinity of all the parts of it, than some serious Christians themselves; tho' with what Views and Intention this is said, the rest of the Pamphlet will hardly suffer us to doubt: It being obvious to argue, that if Books coming any Way from God, must be so exact and unexceptionable, since those contain'd in the Bible, do not seem to them to answer that Expectation in every thing, they cannot be suppos'd to come from Him, but must be Forgeries. Just thus do the Deists reason also in abundance of other Cases: as for Instance, about Christ's Appearances after his Resurrection: If Christ had really risen again, he would certainly have appear'd to the Sanhedrim, and Body of the Jewish Nation, as openly as he did before, to take away all Pretences to Infidelity in that matter: and by Consequence, since his own Followes confess that he appear'd *† not unto all the People; but only unto some peculiar Men, as Witnesses chosen before of God,* we are not to suppose that he did really rise at all. While all this sort of human reasoning, and these Devices of Men, are wholly opposite to the Counsel and Measures of the great God, declared every where in the sacred Books, and the oldest Records of our Religion; *contrary to which Declaration, no one ought to pretend to justify*

* *pag 110. † Act X. 41.*

their divine Original and Authority. For For judgment, or distinction of Men, did Christ certainly come into the World; that those honest Persons that saw not, through want of Light, might see; and those wicked and conceited Persons that pretended most to see, might be made blind.* Accordingly the whole Conduct of † Divine Revelation, has been all along suited to this grand Design of Providence. The Sacred Books themselves, have every where such Doubts and Difficulties in lesser Matters; the Secrets of the Providence of God, in the unequal Distributions of the good Things of this Life, and even of the outward Advantages of being his Peculiar Church and People, are so little therein opened to us, nay were so little known by the Prophets and sacred Writers themselves; so many occasional Histories and Passages are inserted, that make Room for Scruples in thoughtful Men; while yet at the same time the Histories themselves are written with that honest Simplicity and Integrity; without all Guile, Prejudice or Deceit: The Predictions are so plain and numerous, and have been in general so exactly accomplish'd all along; the Wonders and Miracles were so many, so visible, and left such lasting Impressions among Men; and the prophane ancient Memoirs, wherever they are of undoubted Authority, do for the main, so fully attest to the Truth of the Facts contained in these sacred Records, and the general Tenor and Drift of all is so evidently for the Support of Piety, Justice and Charity; for the encouraging of the Worship of the One Supreme God, and for the Observance of Virtue and the Laws of Nature; in short its Con-

* Joh. IX. 39. † See Chronology of the Old Testament p. 3—7. and Recognitions passim. rents

rents are so certain, so well attested by Fact and History, and yet so different from human, or contrary to the obvious Thoughts, and Notions, and Imaginations of mortal Men, that they are most exactly calculated for the foregoing Purposes of God, so visibly and frequently declar'd therein : *viz* The Conviction, Edification, and Salvation of the Honest, Pious, and well Disposed ; and the Stumbling and Fall of the Wicked, Profane, and Captious in all Ages. And by them God the Father has, as he intended, most evidently, *hid* the Mysteries of his Kingdom * *from the seemingly Wise and Prudent, and has only revealed them unto Babes,* or the teachable and upright Enquirers into them. Nor do the sacred Scriptures ever pretend to a greater Degree of Inspiration, or of Divine Conduct about them, than was consistent with this *Grand Design of his Providence* thereto relating : and the Contents of the several Branches all along answer to that Degree of Inspiration and Divine Conduct, and to no other ; as might be shewn more at large, if it were necessary, in this Place. Accordingly these sacred Books being still owned by the Good, the Honest, the Humble and the Sincere, that come to their perusal, not with an easy and credulous, but with a sober, honest, and impartial Mind, and with Prayer for the Divine Illumination by them ; and being rejected or doubted of, chiefly by the Wicked, the Designing, the Proud, and the Captious ; it appears that the Aim of Providence is still attained ; and not only the Believers by receiving them, but the very Unbelievers themselves by rejecting them, are made Evidences of their Truth and Divine Original,

by † *falling*, and *being ensnared*, and *taken in their own Craftiness*, and *Guile*, and *Wickedness*, exactly according to the *Declarations therein made to Mankind*.

(7.) We have here and || elsewhere, abundance of Instances, taken from late Writers, of *Passion*, and *Party*, and *Knavery*, and *Forgery*, and insisted on in such a manner; as if they were to be imputed to *Christianity*, and its proper *Clergy*, and *genuine Members*: whereas they are all later than the pure and primitive State of *Christianity*; and are no other than the Effects of that spiritual *Wickedness*, *Ecclesiastical Tyranny*, and *Antichristian Prevarication*, which took place in, and after the Days of *Constantine* and *Athanasius*; which was frequently foretold in the sacred Scriptures; and which alter'd the Nature of our Religion, the Laws of the Gospel, the Constitution of the Clergy, and the entire Exercise of Christian Discipline: the doleful Effects of which sad State, good Men do so much deplore at this Day; and the Consequence whereof has been the endangering the very Belief of the Gospel it self in the World. However, all this is not one Syllable to the Purpose of our Unbelievers in the Way of Reason and Argument, but the Contrary. For, give me leave to ask, Has there been abundance of *Passion*, and *Party*, and *Faction* in the Church, since it was incorporated with the State, and seculariz'd thereby? Has the Antichristian Church, and others that retain too much of her Principles and Practices, used cunning Tricks, and knavish Methods of imposing on their Followers and Vassals? Have they made use of pious Frauds, gross Inter-

polations, notorious Corruptions, and manifest Forgeries to support their wicked Designs? Has the Clergy thereby been very often wrong educated, wrong elected, ty d down by Subscriptions, and affrighted generally by temporal Disadvantages from examining, and preaching, and practising many Christian Truths and Duties? Has the true Authority and Power of the Bishops and Clergy been thereby turn'd from the effectual Exercise of Christian Discipline, and the Reformation of the manners of the Ministers and People committed to their Care, to a temporal sort of Tyranny, in making Articles of Faith or Communion, and Laws or Rules of their own, and then procuring the Sanction of the temporal Power for their Execution; and so to the erecting a spiritual Inquisition in the Church? Have the original serious Exhortations of the Gospel from the Pulpit often degenerated into party Harangues, and political Sermons? Have the old sober Apologies for Christianity, and the plain and affecting Books of ancient Piety and Devotion, been turned frequently into little Disputes and angry Invectives of one Party of Christians against another? Is the honest open Simplicity, Truth, and Sincerity of the first Followers of Christ almost lost among the Prudence and Politicks of our new Christians? Is the known Brevity and Plainness of the original Creeds, Doctrines, and Articles of Faith, almost swallowed up in the unintelligible Mysteries, absurd Notions, and disputable Forms of these later corrupt Ages of the Church? And is the main Pursuit of the Leaders of Parties of late, bent so much to the present World, and temporal Regards, that that *Heaven* which the original Embracers of the Gospel mainly sought for,

for, seems almost out of their View; any farther I mean than as the recommending it to others may help those that recommend it to some Advantage in this World? Are these the visible and notorious Effects of that vast Change of things, which Constantine and Athanasius first introduc'd into the Church, and which have gradually spread over Christendom, without any effectual or general Reformation to this Day? And shall not all the Good and Honest thereupon esteem, and honour, that prior and better State of genuine Christianity? that pure, and holy, and religious, and heavenly Settlement which Christ and his Apostles left to his Church? that I mean which now appears most plainly in the Constitutions of the Apostles, in the sacred Scriptures of the New Testament, and in the Books, and Practice of the ancient Christians? Shall not we have a just Indignation against those modern Corruptions, notorious Corruptions, every where now in the Church, both sullyng and disgracing our common Christianity? And shall not we shew our Love for the † pure and undefiled Religion of our Lord and Saviour, by our going into all prudent and proper Methods for the Restoration of the same among us? This certainly is the only just Inference from these Premises; and not to take a Handle from the Wickedness of this Antichristian State of things at present, to make it still worse, by introducing open Impiety and Infidelity, and thereby to take away all Hopes of any better times in this, or of any future Happiness in the other World. Yet I cannot but here say with our Blessed Lord, that tho' || *It was necessary that these*

† Jam I. 27. || Matt. XVIII. 6, 7.

Offences should come, yet Wo unto those men, whether Governors or Governed, whether Clergy or Laity, whether Papists or Protestants, whether Churchmen or Dissenters, by whom they come : Good were it for them that a Millstone had been hanged about their Neck, and they had been drowned in the Depth of the Sea, rather than they should have given such Occasions to the Enemies of Christ to blaspheme. However as to the Cause itself, I venture to promise, that when the Deists shall shew me that the primitive State of Christianity was like the present in these matters, I will turn Deist also ; and to foretel that when that primitive State is in earnest reviv'd among us, which I hope will be in not very many Years time, all such Pamphlets as these will signify nothing, as to the Christians, but only turn to the Reproach of their Authors and Abettors for ever.

(8.) Many things are here taken for granted on the Foot of *Free Thinking*, that require another kind of *Examination*, and which upon such *Examination* will appear to be quite otherwise. Thus it is here asserted, † that the most *Ancient Fathers of the Church* absurdly suppos'd God to be *Material* : which I take to be intirely false. Nay indeed 'tis very probable *Tertullian*, by that *Corporeity* of God which he speaks of, meant no more than the Reality and *Substantiality* of his Nature, in Opposition to a meer virtual Being or Presence. The like I might say as to the || *Unlawfulness of Self-defence in any Case whatsoever* ; and that *Second Marriages were esteem'd a kind of Adultery* ; which last he can only have from such a rigid Heretick as the same *Tertullian* : while in the Laity they were freely

permitted, without Imputation : nay while even third Marriages were not directly forbidden to the same Persons. Nor am I sensible that there was then any proper Law for the Laity against Usury in general ; tho' after the Council of Nice, that and abundance of such new Burthens were laid upon Christians by the Church, without any original Authority or Direction in the Gospel. Thus it is affirm'd that † *the whole Affair of Oracles among the Pagans, was nothing else but the Artifice of Priests, to impose on the Senses of the People ;* and accordingly the Author gives you such an Account of their Caverns, and Holes, and Echoes, and Noises, and Machines, as if he had seen many of them, and had been let into the intire Secret : while the Author is conscious that what he here says, is not only destitute of, but entirely contrary to the original Testimonies and Authorities ; and is properly owing to his own and his Friends peculiar manner of *Free Thinking* : which Argument I take to be of not much more Value, in this and the like Cases, than are the Dreams of Men, against their waking Observations. And the same is to be said, as to the || Appearances of invisible Beings or Dæmons, with the Business of Witchcraft. In all which Cases, those that judge by the Evidence of Fact and Testimony, may easily be of another Opinion. And for my self, tho' I fear many innocent Persons may have been unjustly condemned, and the Testimony of those under Distraction or dæmoniacal Possession, which is either no Evidence at all, or at best no more than dæmoniacal, has been too easily allow'd for Conviction; and tho' I believe Cheat, and Imposition, and Mi-

stake are very often found in, or mixed with
 such Accounts, both among Heathens, Jews,
 and Christians, yet do I fully believe all has not
 been Cheat and Imposture; but that, according
 to the undoubted Declarations of the Scripture,
 and the general Consent of all Nations and Ages,
Invisible Powers, both good and bad, have fre-
quently been permitted to interpose in the Affairs
of Mankind; altho' the Nature of the Divine Con-
duct already observ'd, would by no means allow of
bringing those matters, any more than others, to
a perfectly undeniable Demonstration. And to
 pass over this Author's idle Observation, that
 † *the Devil is entirely banish'd the United Provinces*, of
 which he knows no more than others; and his
 Reflexion upon several Reverend Divines, who
 he says || *are well skill'd in the Prophets and Revelati-*
ons, and soon expect the second Coming of our Blessed
Saviour; while he is yet endeavouring to take
away Faith from the Earth; which when it shall be
almost gone, we shall have a farther Sign of the
approach of that Advent of our Blessed Saviour:
 as he says himself, * *When the Son of Man cometh*
shall he find Faith on the Earth? To pass by also his
 Erratum or Dele, † *If a Man be under an Obligation*
to listen to any Revelation at all; which some suspect
 was inserted to make the Passage more remarka-
 ble, It is here ∴ hinted, that the Difference
 of the Hebrew and Septuagint Copies of the Bi-
 ble, is a mighty weakning to Christianity: while
 yet 'tis not certain that in the first Century there
 was any such Difference at all between them;
 nor indeed very often of mighty Consequence
 thereto, which of their present different Chrono-

logies or Readings we follow. In reality I think the Causes of the present Differences between those Copies, are not yet sufficiently discover'd, and several Observations necessary thereto, have been hitherto omitted by the Learned. Only so far I venture to give my own Thoughts, that those Differences were not, generally speaking, original; nay that they were not so in the Days of Philo and Josephus; that the then agreeing Copies were truly quoted in the first Ages of the Gospel; that the Occasions of the present Differences seem generally owing to the scattered State of the Jews after the Destruction of Jerusalem, and before the Days of Origen; and that the more we can recover of the Hebrew or Samaritan Text and Greek Copies, as they were in the first Century, in these disagreeing Places, the less Difficulties shall we have upon us, and the more exact will the Citations of Christ, his Apostles and the first Christians appear to be. But then as to the unpublish'd || Samaritan Chronology, as disagreeing with the Hebrew Accounts, I venture to say the Christian Church will be in no Fear of its open Appearance in the World. All such spurious Pièces rather still tending to the Honour of the genuine Scriptures; and only supplying injudicious Writers with Matter for the Amusement of the ignorant and unlearned Readers; after which they immediately come to nothing.

(9.) We have here *Superstition* and *Religion* perpetually confounded; nay, *Timor Deorum* is rendered * *The Fear of God*, and is made the Definition of *Superstition*. Somewhat like this might pass for tolerable under Paganism, when *Religio*

commonly signified *Heathen Superstition*, and when they had no other but a superstitious Form of Worship among them; but 'tis intolerable under Christianity, when Religion is us'd in a nobler Sense, and when its original Settlements, still extant in the Apostolical Constitutions, and the Scripture, are so far from unmanly, servile, or over-run with little useless Ceremonies, which is the known Character of Superstition, that 'tis for certain the most just, rational, pious and regular Method of an'holy Life, of divine Worship, of a righteous, charitable and humble Behaviour, of a regular Discipline, and of an heavenly Conversation that ever was upon God's Earth; and that without any Terrors or affrightful Threats upon any, but the obstinately Wicked and Incorrigible. In truth, I look upon a Life led according to those Rules, to be the most noble, most useful, and most pleasant that a rational Creature is capable of in this World; and that it affords such solid Foundations of Consolation under all the Troubles of this Life, and even under Persecution and Death it self, that no other Method of Religion, or if you will Irreligion, can compare with it: since it self is the highest and best Institution of *Religion*; and *Irreligion*, besides its other Miseries, can never afford any Assurance or Security against a future Judgment, and the Punishments of another World; and so by Consequence must always leave Room for Fear, and Horror, and Despair at present; as well as expose Men, if Religion be true, to the dreadful Vengeance of divine Justice hereafter.

For tho' I do not perceive that God has threatened to preserve the Lives or State of the Wicked or Unbelievers in Torment to all Eternity; yet has he certainly assur'd us, their Misery shall be

too severe and too lasting to be undergone, or even thought of without Horror, Agony and Amazement. And what wise Man would run the least Risque of all this, only to avoid the * *living soberly, righteously and godly*, or according to the most excellent Laws of the Gospel, in this present World? and that in Hopes of a blessed Reward in the Kingdom of Heaven? And O that this Writer and all of us may Consider this, and shew ourselves Men! and with wise Solomon, whom our Author himself puts among his Free Thinkers, resolve to † Fear God, and keep his Commandments; because therein consists the whole Happiness of Man: considering that God will bring every Work into Judgment, with every secret Thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

But to return; As to || real Superstition, Magick Terrors and Rites, Omens, Enchantments, Astrological Predictions, &c. this Author cannot but know they are entirely forbidden by our Holy Religion; and so no way to be charg'd upon it: as indeed he does own that all the † Ceremonies or vain Divinations in the Heathen Temples, were intirely discountenanc'd by the ancient Christians; tho' he ought to confess it was not because they believ'd them nothing but Cheats of the Priests; as he here intimates; but because they look'd on them, as what their very Baptism taught them to abhor, when they ∴ Renounced Satan, and his Works, and his Poms, and his Worship, and his Angels, and his Inventions, and all things that are under him: the delivering Men from the Tyranny of which wicked Spirits, was look'd on then as one principal Advantage of the Advent

* Tit. II. 12. † Eccles. XII. 13, 14. † pag. 35, &c.
† pag. 20. ∴ Constitut. lib. VII. cap. 41, & pag. 379, 380.

of our Blessed Saviour. Nor indeed am I yet satisfied, that all the spurious Miracles so current under * Athanasianism and Popery, and of which our Author makes such Advantage, were meer Cheats; but suspect that there have frequently been Dæmoniacal Operations and Illusions intermixed with them: and that from the very Days of Anthony the Monk, to our own Age. But this only by the By.

(10.) We have, || here broad Hints, that Men need have *no Fear of any future Misery or Evil at the Hands of God*; and that *Misery in the next World, is a thing of which men are incapable of having any convincing Evidence*; and so they need not be afraid of future Punishment for their Sins; let the Convictions of their own Consciences tell them never so freely they justly deserve it; or let the Revelations of God be never so plain and so well attested, thereto relating. I cannot here, amidst my Wonder at this Authors Boldness, but commend his Way of Management; I mean when he takes care to know all this *a priori* from *Free Thinking*, and so saves himself the Labour of farther Demonstration. And I think him a very fit Person to comfort and encourage our Thieves and Cut-throats, under all their Fears and Terrors, lest publick Justice should overtake them at last. For to be sure he can easily tell them that, ' There is
' no occasion for any uneasy Fears, or any melancholy Apprehensions of Laws, and Punishments, Judges, and Juries, Condemnations, and Executions. That indeed there has
' been much Talk of such Things, and several
' have pretended to have read, and heard, and seen
' and felt the Effects of them; Yet he can prove

' there is no Foundation for any Supposals of
 ' that Nature, because it is easy to prove *a priori*,
 ' and by *Free Thinking* that it must be all false,
 ' and inconsistent with the Queens Justice, Cle-
 ' mency, Goodness, and Affection to her Sub-
 ' jects; with many more demonstrative Argu-
 ' ments of the like Nature that he could use in
 ' that Case. Only I fear that such an Harangue
 as this, would rather make the Orator pass for
 one Distracted, than afford the least Jot of Com-
 fort to the guilty Offenders. Which is also very
 much the Case in the Parallel before us. But then
 if he means all this, not only for the Ease of the
 Offenders, but for the Benefit and Advantage of
 human Life in general, I shall beg Leave to ad-
 dress my self to him in the excellent Words of
Peter, out of the *Recognitions* upon occasion of
 those that then took away the Hopes and Fears
 of another World; and to desire he will please to
 consider seriously of them. ' Now you assert, says
 '* he to *Simon Magus*, that the Soul is mortal,
 ' that Men may not, in Hope of future Happiness,
 ' live well and justly. For certainly if Men des-
 ' pair of future Happiness, what will be the Con-
 ' sequence, but that Mercy will be cut off, and
 ' Men will indulge themselves in Luxury and Plea-
 ' sures, whence 'tis certain all Injustice does arise?
 ' Yet while you introduce a Doctrine of so great
 ' Impiety into this miserable Life of Mortal Men,
 ' you call your self a pious Person, and me an im-
 ' pious one; because, as I suppose, I put a Re-
 ' straint upon Men, by the Hope of future Happi-
 ' ness, from taking up Arms and fighting with one
 ' another; from disturbing and subverting every

thing ; and undertaking all Enterprizes that Lust
 can dictate to them. And what a State of Life
 must that be, which you would introduce ? That
 Men may beat and be beaten ; that they may be
 in a Rage with one another, and full of Confusi-
 on, and live in perpetual Fear : for it cannot be
 avoided, but those that bring Mischiefs on others,
 must themselves expect to be treated in the like
 manner. Don't you perceive now that you are a
 Leader of Disturbance, and not of Peace, of Ini-
 quity, not of Equity ? And afterward : * What
 good have the Philosophers done to human Life,
 by saying that God is never angry at Men ? I
 suppose only this, to teach them that no Body
 need be at all afraid of any Vengeance, or Day of
 Judgment ; and thereby to loose the Reins intire-
 ly to Sinners. Or what Advantage have they
 brought to Mankind, who have said there is no
 God, and that all things happen by Chance and
 accidentally ? Is not this the Consequence there-
 of, that Men that hear such Doctrine, and sup-
 pose there is no Judge, none that exercises any
 Providence in the World, wil lsear no Body, but
 will be carried headlong into all Wickedness,
 which either Rage, or Covetousness, or Lust
 can dictate to them ? For even those that say no-
 thing can be done but according to the Scheme
 of Nativity, have not much improved human
 Life : since the Consequence is, that every one,
 by ascribing the Cause of his Sin to his Geniture,
 satisfies himself that he is innocent in his wicked
 Practices ; while instead of washing away his
 Crime by Repentance, he doubles his Guilt by
 ascribing it to Fatality.

(11.) We have * here a large Account of the Difference of Opinions among Priests, Christian as well as Heathen; and many notable Examples produc'd, and Passages inserted, which the Author thinks proves it undeniably. But now, tho this be very true in the vulgar Sense, wherein Papists, Protestants, Lutherans, Calvinists, the Followers of general Councils, of *Athanasius*, *Austin*, *Cranmer*, or *Cartwright*, are called *Christians*; Yet in a strict Sense it is utterly false. For As he that follows *Athanasius* is an *Athanasian*; he that subscribes to the Council of *Nice* is a *Nicean*; he that is guided by the Council of *Constantinople* is a *Constantinopolitan*; he that believes the Council of *Ephesus* is an *Ephesian*; and he that depends on the Council of *Chalcedon* is a *Chalcedonian*, So is he and only he that follows *Christ* and his Apostles, properly speaking, a *Christian*. Now I venture to affirm, upon the Credit of a frequent and careful Perusal of all the genuine Remains of original Christianity, that there is no Foundation for this Imputation upon it; particularly in those very Points, which our Author instances in for the Proof of this Assertion. And I wish all that call themselves Christians at present, would consider well of this matter; and laying aside the Notions of their several Parties and Churches, would with one Consent resolve to return to *Primitive Christianity*; which they would then find all of a Piece, easy to be discover'd, and a certain Foundation of their Unity, Peace and Agreement. This would be the most effectual Confutation, not only of the present Author, but of all the Unbelievers for ever: till which time 'tis easy to see

they will get Ground, and will triumph over us, without a Possibility of any other effectual Stop or Confutation. Only I must say farther, that several Passages here alledg'd from *A. B. King*, *Bp. Taylor*, *Mr. Braddock*, *Dr. Sherlock*, *Dr. South*, *Dr. Wallis*, *Mr. Nye*, *Dr. Gastrell*, *Bp. Aylmer*, *Mr. Seller*, *Bp. Sanderson*, and *Bp. Parker* are such as stand in great need of an Apology, if they are capable of it. But since I am alone concern'd in vindicating the Christian Religion, which is no way interested in the Rashness of any modern Churches or Persons about such matters, I shall leave their Vindication to such as are better qualified and dispos'd to spend their time in those matters. I need not now insist on this Author's next * Head, *viz.* the Contradictions to Reason and to one another, which some have own'd as to the Doctrines they receiv'd; since this affects not the Christian Faith it self, wherein no such Contradictions appear, but the late Notions and Hypotheses of some modern Parties among us only; nor will the rash Sayings of *Dr. Sacheverel*, *Bp. Beveridge*, and *Dr. South*, which are all that are alledg'd in this Place as absurd, at all affect the Religion of our Saviour; till it can be made appear, that *that* is also justly chargeable with such Inconsistency and Contradiction: which I think these Authors, can never prove it to be. Nor need I in the next place, add much as to what is said, that by the Acknowledgment of || *Dr. Grabe* and *Dr. Hickes* there are still Abuses, and Defects, and false Doctrines in our Church; since my own Opinion is so well known already on the same Side; and that as to several

of the very same Points also that are here mention'd in particular. Nor can any Body so much as seriously pretend, that we have any real Church-Discipline at all. In the next † Place we have Examples of the Priests professing they will not tell the Truth, but reproaching those that do so. Now I shall be so far from justifying any of the Passages here quoted from Dr. Atterbury, the Bp. of Worcester, and Dr. Edwards of Oxford, or that of A. B. Cranmer himself, if it were meant as he supposes, that I look on them as shameful and intolerable. We have then another sad Instance of the Priests Conduct, viz. || The branding those they dislike, with the odious Names of Socinian, Deist or Atheist, without any just Occasion. Now that this has been very unjustly done sometimes, is too plain to be deny'd. Only let the Guilty answer for themselves, and let the Innocent not be condemn'd with them. Nor is this a Fault peculiar to Priests, but common to all the violent Parties, as such, one against another. But as for that heavy Charge in particular of the very Learned Dr. Hickee upon the great and good A. B. Tillotson, that He was the gravest Atheist that ever was, I would fain disbelieve the Truth of it: And it being only a Quotation in a nameless Pamphlet, suppos'd to be his, from another written by a Person of quite different Principles before, there seems to be Room for it: otherwise it must stand as an amazing Monument of the heat of Party, and the strange Violence which Oppression sometimes drives the greatest Men to; I mean to represent that excellent Person as an Atheist, whose whole Life and Labours were spent in vindicating Religion both natural and reveal'd, with the

greatest Success ; and endeavouring so to represent and reform them from Mistakes and Perversion, that they might be universally receiv'd by Mankind. Nor do such as these well consider what Ends they serve, when they unwarily stigmatize such Men as the Archbishop, Mr. *Lock*, &c. with the Names of *Socinian*, *Deist* or *Atheist* ; It being certainly not the way to support the Credit of Religion, or of any of its Doctrines in the World, to have it thought that the most considering, fair, and judicious Persons are dissatisfied or Unbelievers ; and such Suspicions proving generally, upon Enquiry, intirely contrary to Truth, and built on no Foundation in the World. I heartily wish the Religious Men of all Parties would make that good Use of this Caution, to take care to give no more Occasion for Complaint on this Head. We have here a little after, † several Instances of the Priests Use of pious Frauds, in translating and publishing Books. Now as to this, no other Answer need be return'd by me, but this, that the old Christians before *Athanasius* abhor all such Practices ; and that all Priests or others, that knowingly do any such thing, are themselves to be had in the utmost Detestation by all Men ; especially by all Christians ; whose very Religion had originally the Name of *Truth* given to it, as intirely depending on Truth and Sincerity in all its Affairs ; in distinction from the wicked Heresies of those Ages, which were supported by Lies, Corruptions, Interpolations and Forgery : so that by consequence all such late Churches, and Parties, and Factions, which are found to support themselves by the same wicked Arts, are so far, plainly Antichristian.

(12.) We have here also all Pretence of God's Revelations to the Jews expos'd, as † making him talk to all Mankind from Corners; * making him have Favorite Nations and People, without any Consideration of Merit: and we have withal great Contempt shew'd of that Nation, as an illiterate, barbarous, and ridiculous People; and, in the wild and profane Language of Dr. South, such as God seems to have espous'd to himself upon the very same Account that Socrates did Xantippe, only for her extreme ill Conditions. Now as to God's talking to the Jews, as from a Corner, 'tis in some Sense notoriously false. His Wonders for them in Egypt, at the Red-Sea, and in Palestine were open, and publick, and famous, over no small part of the then inhabited World: they seem on the contrary, design'd as standing † Monuments of the divine Power and Providence, in fulfilling his Promises to the Obedient, and executing his Threatnings on the Disobedient; even before the rest of the World, and to many Generations. And accordingly all Nations were permitted or invited to become Profelytes, to embrace the Worship, and put themselves under the Protection of the One true God; and this without laying any necessary Obligation upon them, as to all the Jewish Ceremonial Observances. Nor was that Nation a Favorite, as to eternal Rewards or Punishments, more than others; but only intrusted with peculiar Talents and Opportunities, and preserv'd in good Measure, from the overspreading Idolatry and endless Superstition of the neighbour Nations, till the coming of their Messias: for all which

† pag. 38. * pag. 39. II 157. † See Constitur. lib. VIII. cap. 12. pag. 402.

they were proportionably accountable to God : and their Abuse of those Mercies, and at last their murdering their Messias, have reduc'd them to be the most miserable of all Nations, till they again repent, in order to their future Recovery and Restoration: that so at last they and all People may find that in reality † *God is no Respector of Persons ; but that in every Nation he that feareth him, and worketh Righteousness, is accepted with him :* Nay it appears probable to me, that how stubborn and stiffnecked a People soever they were of old, yet were they not worse, nor more wicked, nor more ignorant, than the rest of the Nations, which were then their Neighbours, in the World, such as the *Egyptians, the Canaanites, the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Chaldeans,* and those others, of whom Mention is made in the sacred History. There being little of that more agreeable Sort of Vertue and Learning then in the World, which the Grecian Philosophy and Politeness afterwards introduc'd, and which spread themselves among the Jewish Nation also, and prepar'd the way for the times of the Messias, both among Jews and Gentiles. However, I fear one great Reason of all this Spite to the Jews is, because their Sacred Books have been receiv'd by the Christians, and do mainly support our Religion : and that the Remains of that Nation, scatter'd over the World, together with all their ancient Records, do give such undeniable Attestation to those Sacred Writings, as makes it impossible for the Deists to attack them by Evidence and Testimonies, and reduces them to the Necessity of opposing to plain Fact, to undoubted Evidence, to certain

Miracles, and to notorious Instances of divine Providence, done in open Face of Mankind, meer *Free Thinking*; or rather downright *groundless Imagination*.

(12.) We have † here and more largely || elsewhere, such Assertions about the *Canon of Scripture*, and the Uncertainty of the sacred Books of our Religion; and all this confirmed by such Quotations out of some Modern Learned Men among us also, that many considering Persons are startled at it. Now my Answer in this Case shall be very short and very plain; *viz.* That all these strange Assertions are false, and groundless, and unsupported by all original Antiquity; that nothing but the laying aside the *Apostolical Constitutions*, with it's Catalogue of Sacred Books, and Quotations from them; and particularly the Rejection of it's 85th Apostolical Canon, could ever have reduc'd so plain a Case to so great an Uncertainty. For the *Canonical Books of Scripture*, both of the Old and New Testament, originally meant nothing but the Books enumerated in that 85th Canon, all which were still esteem'd Genuine and Sacred, and were all, but the Constitutions, accordingly read in the publick Assemblies of Christians, and called by the solemn Name of *Scripture*: as were also the rest of the Books written after the making of that Canon, by any of the Apostles, or their original Companions and Attendants, such as *Barnabas, Hermas, Ignatius, and Polycarp*, and by no others. I mention the *Constitutions of the Apostles*, as certainly *Canonical*; since they are in all the known Copies of that original Canon; and I desire this Author, who

seems to wonder that the *Abyssinian* Christians receive them, to shew me any one Copy where they are wanting; or indeed to name me any one truly Primitive Christian Church, that was govern'd by any other Rules of Faith, and Discipline, and Worship, and Government, than those contain'd in them. For as to those many other doubtful or spurious Pieces, which are reckon'd up here and elsewhere, there is no Pretence for their being in the *Canon*; or that they were called *Scripture*, or cited as of compleat Authority, or indeed read in the publick Assemblies of Christians in the first Ages: which alone were the Characters of Books most properly *Divine* or *Sacred* among them. Nay most of the Books in these Catalogues were the Product of the old Hereticks, and so had in Detestation by all Christians. But I have had Occasion to examine this matter elsewhere, whither I must here refer the Reader; and to which Proof I must desire a through Answer before this *Uncertainty of the Canon of Scriptures*, so much insisted on of late, is any more mention'd on these Occasions.

(14.) Some things are here set down as fundamental Branches of Christianity, in order, as 'tis to be fear'd, to expose it, while the Author could hardly believe them to be any Parts of original Christianity at all, but must know, or at least suspect they came into the Church in later Ages. Thus in one Place we have it asserted, that † *The most Fundamental Doctrine of the whole Christian Religion, is the Doctrine of the ever Blessed Trinity*, which he elsewhere explains, as implying ∴ *Christ to be God and*

Man, and God's Son, and the same numerical Being with
 that God whose Son he was, and yet personally distinct from
 *him. And afterward, The Doctrine of Original Sin, or that
Men are now lyable to be damned for Adam's Sin, is the
Foundation of the whole Christian Religion. I dare
 appeal to the Author's Conscience, whether he
 believes what he here says to be true; and to the
 Readers whether, if he does not, these are not,
 plain Instances of that Prevarication and Insincer-
 ity, which he so vehemently complains of in
 the Clergy and the Church. My own Opinions
 in these Cases are so well known to the contrary,
 that I need add nothing farther to declare them
 upon this Occasion.

(15.) We have † here and elsewhere a great
 noise made with the various readings of the New
 Testament in Dr. Mills, above 30000 in number;
 and a Quotation from Dr. Whitby, how doubtful
 they must render the Text itself. Now as to this,
 all I need say here is, that those various Readings
 are so far from hurting the Text, or weak-
 ning its Authority in general, that they give
 mighty light to it; shew how it has been in con-
 stant Use and Reputation; are a grand Hedge and
 Security about it; shew us sometimes the real ori-
 ginal Writing of the Apostles in disputable Points;
 and are undeniable Attestations to the main current
 and coherence of our common Copies. It being
 evident that out of those 30000 there is scarce
 Fifty that do considerably alter the Sense of the
 Places; and of them scarce Ten that do so in any
 Points of great Difficulty and Importance. So
 that to speak my Mind plainly, whenever I find
 such a Noise made in this case, I shrewdly suspect

either gross Ignorance as to those various Readings themselves, and the proper Nature and Use of them; or great Passion, Prejudice and want of Judgment; and on the contrary cannot but wish that the various Readings of the Hebrew Copies of the Old Testament had been preserv'd as well as those of the New; being very secure that thence great Light would often have arisen to many Texts, which no Commentator can now unfold to us upon any certain Foundation. I pass over that idle Tale and miserable Translation about the *† Correction of the Holy Gospels under Anastasius, as written by Idiot Evangelists*. For this Author cannot be so weak as to think any of our Copies of the Gospels are such as have been so corrected, if ever any such foolish Thing, in the way of Forgery, was attempted by any Body; I say in the way of Forgery only; or as intending any Diminution or Suppression of the original Gospels themselves thereby. Otherwise many honest Paraphrases, and some useful Versions do endeavour to express more easily, and in a politer Stile, what the Sacred Writers speak, in a plainer and more unartful Language: Whether || *Tatian's* Design in his Paraphrase on *Paul's* Epistles, wherein he is said to have amended the Construction of the Apostles Language, were of the former or of the latter sort, 'tis hard now to determine, since the Book is lost: as it is also to do so in the present Case, for want of any Remains of this pretended Paraphrase or Correction before us under *Anastasius*, if ever such a thing was then really put in Practice: of which yet the intire Silence of all other Historians about it leaves great room to doubt. But this Translation

† pag. 20. || Euseb. Hist. Eccl. Lib. IV. cap. 29.

of *ab idiotis Evangelistis*, by *Idiot* instead of *plain and unartful Evangelists* deserves rather the Rod of a Schoolmaster, than the Reflexion of a Scholar upon it. If a Clergy-Man had been guilty of so great Weakness or Prevarication, call it which you please, as this Translation, which yet is not the only one of this Nature in this Pamphlet, he would hardly have escaped the Lash of this Writer, or of his Brethren, upon a proper Occasion.

(16.) What is here said, * ‘ as if the Streets of *London* are full of Common Whores, who are in effect publickly tolerated in their Wickedness; and the Whore-mongers free from all Punishment, and almost from Censure; and as if few or no Complaints are made of this Wickedness, either from the Pulpit or the Press; I take to be entirely false. Certainly our Author has heard, at least of one *Society for the Reformation of Manners*, with the annual Sermons and the Books belonging to them. However if things be still so very bad among us, notwithstanding the constant Diligence of that Body, that such Men as this Author and † *Dr. Swift* are forc’d to cry out for Discipline and Reformation; nay that even the Author of the *Examiner* cannot bear the Insults that are made upon Religion and the Clergy in this very Pamphlet, but endeavours to confute it, and to support Christianity; I hope all really good Men, will not be any more discourag’d in their Attempts for such Restoration of Discipline, and, an intire Reformation; and that I my self also shall be allowed, without Offence, to contribute what I can, to this Amendment of things amiss, and to the Revival of Primitive Christiani-

* pag. 116. † *Swift's Project for Reformation of Manners*.

ty among us. I heartily wish that all such Men as these were in earnest: For if they were but in any degree so, neither Morality nor Christianity could possibly be at that low Ebb among us, which sad Experience teaches us they really are.

(17.) We have || here such a Catalogue of *Free-Thinkers* put together, as is very odd and whimsical, very unfair and disagreeable; they are these, *Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, Plutarch, Varro, Cato the Censor, Cicero, Cato of Utica, Seneca, Solomon, The Prophets, Josephus, Origen, Minutius Felix, Synesius, The Lord Bacon, Mr. Hobbes, and A. B. Tillotson*; besides One and Twenty more that are only nam'd. Certainly so many Persons of so very different Characters, have not commonly been rank'd together. Tho' how it comes to pass that the † *Divine Virgil*, and some more such *Divine Heathen Poets* do not appear among them, I do not understand. Now if this Author by a *Free Thinker* means only a great and good Man, that does his utmost to oppose the Prejudices and Superstitions, the Vices, and Errors, and Corruptions of the Times he lives in; this is a very imperfect Catalogue: but if he means *Free Thinkers* in Opposition to the Embracers of true Religion, (which consists in the Love and Fear of God, the Dependence on his Providence, the Hopes of his Rewards, and the Dread of his Punishments in this and the other World, and the Prosecution of Holiness and Vertue, as a Law deriv'd from the Blessed Author of all their Enjoyments, and in order to approve themselves to him,) as he seems to do, he must leave out the greatest Part of even these, nay must place not a

few of them among the principal Promoters of Religion ; and content himself with *Epicurus* of Old, and Mr. *Hobbes* of late ; or with two or three more out of these Forty at the utmost. What is here chiefly remarkable is his claiming ¶ *Cicero* for a *Free Thinker*, in his irreligious Sense of the Words, contrary to the main Tenor of his Writings, whatever this Author pretends ; a few of which Passages I shall here transcribe for his Vindication. ‘ O Blessed Day, says his † *Cato*, when
‘ I shall go to that great Assembly and Company
‘ of Divine Souls ! and shall get away from this
‘ Rout and Disagreeable Mixture of People here !
‘ For I shall not only go to those Men whom I
‘ spake of before, but also to my *Cato*, one of the
‘ best and most pious Men that ever was born ;
‘ and whose Body was committed to the Funeral
‘ Pile by me ; whereas mine ought to have been so
‘ by him. While his Soul did not desert me, but
‘ look’d back upon me, and so no doubt departed
‘ into those Places, whither he saw I my self was
‘ to come hereafter. And presently, under the
‘ same Person’s Name. ‘ But if I be in an Error
‘ in believing that the Souls of Men are Immor-
‘ tal, ’tis a very agreeable Error : nor shall I be
‘ willing to have it ever extorted from me while
‘ I live. However, if when I am dead I shall have
‘ no more Perception, as some small Philosophers
‘ suppose, [not *Cicero* himself certainly,] I
‘ dont fear being laugh’d at for this Error, by those
‘ dead Philosophers. Which Passages, with ma-
‘ ny other in *Tully*’s Writings, do indeed intimate
‘ no small Degree of Uncertainty about it, in
‘ such Men as *Cato* and *Cicero* ; but yet they plainly
‘ imply that their real, nay darling Opinion was for
‘ its Immortality. But that *Solomon* and the Prophets

should be brought into the Rank of these *Free Thinkers*, because the former introduces and confutes an Irreligious Speaker, and the latter reproves the Jews for their Formality in their outward Observances, without any Regard to inward Purity, Piety, and Obedience, and sadly complains of the Corruption of the Prophets and Priests among them at that time; is still more awkward, profane, and ridiculous. And it were but to expose ones self to the Laughter of this Author and his Friends, to go about operously to vindicate either of them; since themselves cannot certainly be serious in the Imputations they lay upon them. Only I must Note, that what is here said under the Pretence of † *Vindicating Solomon for his want of Knowledge, as to the Immortality of the Soul*, seems to me all built on a Mistake. That Immortality which was properly a new reveal'd under Christianity being the immediate Immortality, or State of the Soul after Death in Joy or Torment, previous to the last Judgment, and the general Resurrection; which indeed either was not, at least was not reveal'd under the Old Testament: while in all Ages it was known and confess'd that Men were to rise again, and be judg'd at the last Day; and then were to enter into Joy or Torment accordingly: which was the grand Principle of Religion all along; till the Idolatry and Wickedness of later Ages, soil'd or eras'd those original Notions in part out of the Souls of Men, as I have had Occasion || elsewhere to observe. Nor does it appear, that *Josephus* disbeliev'd himself those Sacred Records he so admirably vindicated against *Apion*, as

† pag. 132. 133. || Sermon and Ess. pag. 86, &c.

this Author would intimate; but that he only endeavour'd to shew a sort of seemingly fair Indifferency and Compliance with the Greeks and Romans in his Accounts, in order to the procuring their better Reception among them; which Method, how little soever I may approve of it my self, yet has been so common among not a few great Men on many Occasions, that I shall not here offer to expose it; much less draw thence such Conclusions as this Author does.

And now I shall address my self, by way of Conclusion, to two Sorts of Persons, I mean to the *Deists*, with this their Defender, so far as he owns that Character; and to my Brethren the *Clergy* themselves, from whose suppos'd Disorders or ill Management, this and the like Authors, take almost all their Occasions and Arguments against Religion. And as to the former sort, the *Deists*, I beg of them to consider how unfairly and unjustly they argue in all such cases; when from the late supposed or real corruptions, prevarications, and tyranny of the Clergy they are willing Men should conclude the falsity or uncertainty of Christianity it self. What consequence is there in this? The Clergy, since temporal Power and Preferments have been annexed to their Order, have been thereby tempted frequently to abuse them, to grow careless, and uncharitable, and proud, and hypocritical; therefore Christ was an Impostor, his Apostles Deceivers, and all the first Bishops and Pastors, who had none of them any temporal Power, or worldly Preferments to tempt them, were as bad; they were in the same manner careless, and uncharitable, and proud, and hypocritical also; how does it follow that because Dr. South, Dr. Atterbury, Dr. Swift,

Dr. *Sachewerel*, or other such like noted Clergy-Men of late, have said or done such things as either really are, or are by the Deists suppos'd to be weak, foolish, knavish, or tyrannical, that therefore *Peter*, and *Paul*, and *John*, are not to be believ'd in their delivery of the Christian Doctrines and Constitutions? Suppose the Council of *Trent*, nay our own Convocations, and the Councils of *Nice*, *Constantinople*, *Ephesus*, or *Chalcedon* themselves have determin'd very rashly and unwarrantably about many Mysteries or Doctrines of Christianity, and laid needless or unjust burdens on the Consciences of Men, is it thence evident that the plain and intelligible Doctrines, and most equitable Duties of the Gospel are unreasonable? Or is it therefore plain that the Canon of Scripture is really it self uncertain, because the Modern Writers have of late been so unacquainted with the original State of that matter as to suffer some Party-Prejudices to supersede the Primitive Testimonies about it? Are not our present Copies of the Bible, so far as they are attested to by the best MSS, and ancient Versions, and Quotations, to be depended on, because some Hereticks have been able to corrupt a few places, in some later Copies, Versions, and Quotations; but which commonly appear by the former to be no better than Corruptions? Is it a clear Case, that because it is now undenyable that the Heretick

{ † *Athanasius* was guilty of a Notorious Forgery in one of the most sacred Points of Christianity, that therefore the old Christians, who always had such Hereticks and such Practices in the utmost Abhorrence, were Knaves also? Nay are the

† See *Athanasius* Convicted of Forgery,

Writers of the first, second, and third Centuries to be discarded, because some otherwise very considerable Persons, such as Bp. *Lilboyd*, Bp. *Parker*, Bp. *Beveridge*, Bp. *Taylor*, Bp. *Sanderson*, Dr. *Whitby*, Dr. *Sherlock*, Dr. *Wallis*, Dr. *Gastrel*, Dr. *Hicks*, Dr. *Edwards* and Mr. *Seller*, have sometimes fallen into unjustifiable Notions and Language in their late Writings? how do the pious Frauds in the Translating and publishing of the Scriptures, and other Authors, by the several Leaders and Promoters of the Modern Parties and Sects, in and since the Days of *Athanasius*, affect the Sincerity, Honesty, and Integrity of the Primitive Christians? While the want of the like earlier examples is a plain sign that there is not the same evidence against them; nay when the like pious Frauds, Omissions, or Interpolations were the known and distinguishing Characters of the *Old Hereticks*, which were the direct Opposites to the true *Christians*. Does it follow that because there has been a long Antichristian State of the Church, which was evidently foretold both in the Old and New Testament, and without the coming of which State those Predictions could not have been true, that therefore the Scripture Prophecies are false or uncertain? Or are we therefore to reject the Bible because it has oftentimes been disbelieved by those whose Vices and sensual Lusts have hindred them from receiving it: or by those who came to its Perusal with proud, partial, and wicked Dispositions and Designs, which it every where foretels would hinder men's belief of it? Are these indeed the Arguings of our Modern exact Reasoners, shrewd Writers, and *Free Thinkers*? of those that find fault with the Christians for their weak inferences, and Inaccurate Deductions?

and

and these the Premises from which Unbelief, Deism, or Atheism are to be the Conclusions? These may indeed dispose all reasonable and cautious Persons to dislike the latter State of the Church, and to look back to the first times of the Gospel: they ought to make all honest and impartial Men careful how they engage themselves deep in any Modern Party, or in general justify any of the present Churches: Nay they must make it the Duty of all that really believe the Christian Religion, to wish for and endeavour the Restoration of Primitive Purity, Sincerity, and Piety among us but no farther. And I dare appeal to the *Deists* themselves, whether they are not sensible of the Weakness of this their reasoning? and whether they are not thereupon self condemned on account of the same? And indeed this their prevarication, and breach of the known Rules of Morality, and Dictates of the Law of Nature, which yet they so peculiarly seem to magnify, is what I most fear as to their condemnation at the great day: *viz. least † they have loved darkness rather than light, because their Deeds are evil*; least they have broken through the Light of Nature, the Rules of unbyass'd Reason, and the Checks of their own Consciences, in order to their Rejection of Reveald Religion, and to get clear of Christianity. Some of them are plainly vicious and profligate Persons, that cannot bear the Restraints of Religion, nor its severe threatenings; and so are oblig'd, out of meer necessity, to take refuge in Scepticism and Infidelity. Others of them, whose Tempers, or Prudence, or natural Conscience, and Probity do not suffer them to

† Joh. III. 19.

run into those excesses of riot, but prompt them to seek a more easy, innocent, and less dangerous Happiness, even in this World, do not yet seem to me to come to the Examination of the Scriptures, with honest and humble Minds ; with a ready obedience to the Laws of Nature ; with a Resolution to yield to proper evidence of Fact and Testimony, in such matters as are alone to be determin'd by it ; with a desire of real instruction and improvement ; with a design to believe what shall appear Reveal'd by God, and to practice what shall appear to be Pleasing to him ; and with hearty Prayers to his Divine Majesty for his direction, Illumination and Blessing : (All which are known Branches of Natural Religion.) Nay such Pamphlets as this shew that they rather read the Bible and other good Books with a formed design of spying Faults, finding Flaws, of starting Objections, and putting to us Questions continually ; that is, they examin in such a manner as the Divine Conduct and Justice has thereupon declar'd them incapable and unworthy of real Advantage and Satisfaction by the same. I here beg leave to make use of the remarkable Words of *Peter*, as they are set down in the Recognitions, that most excellent System of Christian Philosophy ; and to recommend them to these Men's serious Consideration. ' If, says he, of
' † *Simon Magus*, I once know that he is a Man of
' Probity, and unblamable in those Points of
' Duty wherein there can be no doubt but they
' are good ; that is if he be sober, if he be merciful,
' if he be just, if he be meek, and humane ;
' which no one can doubt to be vertuous and

* good things; then it will in all probability be rea-
 * sonable to expect that to him that hath these ex-
 * cellent Vertues, that which is wanting to his faith
 * and Knowledge will be confer'd; and that, where-
 * in his Life, which is so commendable in the rest,
 * shall still appear blamable, it may be amended.
 * But if he be involv'd and polluted in Sins; those
 * I mean which are notoriously such; I must
 * not then declare plainly to him the least part of
 * the conceal'd recondite Branches of divine
 * Knowledge; but rather with great Boldness deal
 * with him that he must leave off his Sins, and
 * amend his vitious Actions. And a little after :
 † * To the End that Unbelievers may be distin-
 * guish'd from Believers; and the Pious from the
 * Impious, the Evil one has Permission to make
 * use of his Arts; whereby every one's Affections
 * toward their proper Parent may be tried. And
 a little lower: || * If we spend this short time of
 * Life in idle and unprofitable Questions, we shall
 * certainly go to God empty, and destitute of
 * good Works. ---- * To those who are well dis-
 * posed, God is manifested by those Works of Na-
 * ture which he has made; and is attested to by
 * his own Creatures: Since therefore there
 * ought to be no Doubt concerning the Existence
 * of God, we are only to enquire about *his Right-*
 * *eousness*, and *his Kingdom*. But if our minds
 * have an inclination to put us on the Enquiry a-
 * bout secret and hidden matters, before we en-
 * quire after the Works of Righteousness, we
 * ought to give an account to our selves of this
 * procedure. For if we live well, and are thought
 * worthy to obtain Salvation, we shall go to

God chaste and pure, and be filled with the Holy Ghost, and shall know all such secret and hidden things, without any cavilling or Question, which at the present, tho' any one should spend the intire time of his Life in the Enquiry, he will be so far from finding them out, that he will bring himself into greater Errors; because he aims to arrive at the Haven of Life, without walking in the Way of Life. I conclude this Exhortation to the Deists, with the Words of their *Free Thinkers Solomon and Ezekiel*; † *Rejoyce, O young Man, in thy Youth; and let thy Heart cheer thee in the Days of thy Youth; and walk in the ways of thy Heart, and in the sight of thine Eyes: but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into Judgment.* || *Say unto them, As I live saith the Lord God, I have no Pleasure in the Death of the Wicked, but that the Wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, Turn ye from your evil ways: for why will ye die, O House of Israel?*

And now for my Brethren of the Clergy, I must beg leave to speak as freely to them as I have done to the Deists: And after all that I have said in these Reflexions, in vindication of true Religion, and genuine Christianity; in Defence of the Church of Christ, and it's Ministers, and in Opposition to the weak Attempts of this Writer; I must own that the main Foundation of this and the like Pamphlets, is the corrupt State of the Church, and the unchristian Behaviour of too many of the leading Clergy in these later Ages; their suppos'd Ambition, Pride, Tyrannical Management, Refusal of Examination and Reformation, Imposition of uncertain Articles, Mysteries, Terms of Art, and Laws of their

† Eccles. XI. 9. || Ezek. XXXIII. 11.

own, their great Neglect of Christian Discipline, their engaging the Temporal Power for their own Support; and for the crushing their Adversaries, and their preaching too often Party Sermons and Political Notions, in compliance to their Supporters, whether of the Court or Country, instead of the serious and spiritual Doctrines and Laws of Jesus Christ; their heaping up Plurality of Livings, without taking sufficient Care of any of them; advancing their own secular Power and Grandeur, without a due Regard to the Conversion, Instruction, Edification, and Salvation of Souls; their railing against and Persecuting their Christian Brethren, who in smaller Matters happen to differ from them; instead of *restoring them in the Spirit of Meekness*, and considering calmly whether they have not sometimes Truth and Justice on their Side. These and the like Vices, enlarg'd upon in this Pamphlet before us, are commonly suppos'd to be among the Clergy, especially the Governing part of them: I mean not only in the Popish Churches, but in those of the Protestants also; especially where they happen to be supported by the State, and can make use of legal Methods for their own Purposes; as in *England, Scotland, Ireland, Holland, Germany*, and almost every where in these Western Parts of *Christendom*. And give me leave to say, these are Vices of so hainous a Nature; so pernicious to Mankind; so reproachful among the Laity; so unworthy of our Holy Profession, both as Christians and Clergy-men; and give such a fatal Handle to the Deists, Atheists, and Libertines to *Abhor the Offerings of the Lord*; to *blaspheme the Name of Christ*; to suspect all Religion to be a Cheat; and even to be believ'd to be so, by many of the Cler-

gy themselves; and they afford them such perpetual Matter for Reproach and Obloquy, Scandal and Calumny against the whole Order; that no Care can be too great to avoid, not only the Vices themselves, but the very Suspicions of them. I mention only some of the *Governing parts* as chiefly obnoxious: Not that the Inferior Clergy are to be suppos'd wholly blameless in these Matters; but that they have comparatively small Opportunities and Temptations, and have it not equally in their Power, were they never so dispos'd, to do much for a Reformation; nay are in many Cases rather the Sufferers under the common Oppression than Actors; as being themselves pen'd up by Articles, Subscriptions, and Canons; and unable to get their own Consciences free from the Snares they are under, without hazarding their very Subsistence, and seeing themselves and their Families reduc'd to Beggary; which, in an Age so little dispos'd for Self-denial and Persecution as this, must needs be a very terrible Consideration to them. Now this being too like the State of the Clergy, and these the Vices which the Laity, especially those inclin'd to Infidelity, think they observe, and cannot but abhor in them, and which are plainly the principal Handles and Occasions for Infidelity it self, I cannot but beg of all my Brethren, by the Bowels of Christ, by the Regards of the Gospel, and the Future Hopes of Christians; as ever they desire to *give up their Accounts with Joy, when the Chief Shepherd shall appear*; nay as they fear the *Terrors of the Lord*; as they will avoid the Lashes of their own Consciences here and hereafter; as they will not be charged with the growing Atheism, Deism, and Infidelity of this Age, and so have both their

own and the Souls of multitudes of others requir'd at their Hands at the great Day; that they will Consider seriously of these matters, and, so far as the Crimes are true, endeavour to amend them. That in particular they will no longer oppose free enquiries, fair examination, and a suitable correction of what is amiss : this procedure of theirs being so warmly and justly complain'd of by many, and so utterly unjustifiable in it self ; more so in any Christian; still more so in any Minister of the Gospel ; and most of all so in any Protestant Minister; since all cannot but know that the Christian Religion, especially as at all Reformed, is entirely founded on such free Enquiries, fair Examination, and suitable Correction of the errors or faults crept at any time into the Church. That they will also, upon any of their Enquiries and Examination, openly and freely own their Sentiments, and Speak and Act accordingly : The contrary procedure whereto, or their artfully concealing, disguising, or directly denying what they cannot but inwardly know to be the truth, being at this day, I fear, a sin too common among several of the more Learned and Judicious of the Clergy, and a sin which when it is discovered by the Laity, as it is sometimes, is justly esteem'd by them a gross instance of Insincerity and Prevarication ; and affords them a notorious Handle against all the Clergy, and that Religion which they Preach. That they will also Endeavour to treat their Adversaries, I do not mean only those of other Religious Sects, but even the Deists themselves, with Fairness and Candor, with Argument and Reason, with Kindness and Humanity ; and shew that they are so far from desiring they may be persecuted, or made any way more miserable, that tis
their

their real love and to, and concern for their happiness here and hereafter that is the Motive to their plain dealing with them. It being evident that this bitter Spirit of Violence and Persecution does chiefly irritate the Passions of Men against Persuasion, and prevents the good Effects of all Endeavours for their Advantage and Conversion. That they will not look on the Protection of the Queen and Law, the Vote of an House of Parliament, or of their own Body in Convocation, their present Legal Power and Authority, no nor on the as great or perhaps greater Vices of their Enemies, to be sufficient for their own justification: That they will reflect how some of their late Management, tho' perhaps encourag'd by the Court, justified or excused in State Papers, and Triumphantly manag'd above board, have exceeding weakn'd their real esteem, interest, and reputation every where, and brought down still more and more Reproaches upon them: That they will observe how such like Proceedings at the beginning of the Reformation sunk the Popish Clergy, and expos'd them to the utmost contempt and hatred of the Nation: while they comply'd with † *Bp. Gardiner* for Persecution, against the more wise and Christian Advice of Cardinal *Pool* for some Reformation: and that they will particularly consider the Sacredness and Duties of their Holy Function; the Dignity and Nature of their Office; the great dependence Religion it self has on their Character and Behaviour; the Solemnity of their Ordination, and the great Obligations they then took upon themselves; and what a noble and high degree of all vertues the Apostles

† *Bp. Burnet's Abridgment of Hist. Reform. Book. III. p. 270.*

do ever suppose and expect in Christian Clergy-Men, as the only Foundation of their Esteem, Honour, and Maintenance in this World; and of their Happiness in the next. Say not that this Advice comes from an *Heretick*, as in Modern improper Language you may be dispos'd to call me; but remember, whoever is the Giver of it, the Advice is certainly good and right: and that if you will not hearken to it now, it will be a witness against you in that day *when God shall judge the the Secrets of Mens hearts*, and shall especially require an account of *our Stewardship*. I conclude with the Affecting words of the Prophet *Ezekiel*, as set down and applied to the Clergy of the Christian Church in the *Apostolical Constitutions* Lib. II. cap. 18. and I earnestly beseech God we may all take warning from them; least they also rise up to all our Condemnation hereafter. *Wo unto the Shepherds of Israel, for they have fed themselves; the Shepherds feed not the Sheep, but themselves. Ye eat the Milk, and are cloath'd with the Wool, ye slay the Strong, ye do not feed the Sheep. The Weak have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with Force and Insult have ye ruled over them; and they were scattered, because there was no Shepherd; and they became Meat to all the Beasts of the Forest.*

Note. That the Facts and Citations are here generally taken for granted, as they stand in this Pamphlet, because my Reasoning did not oblige me to any farther Enquiry about them; but this without supposing them to be really so. For by what Tryals I or some others have made, they seem so inaccurate, mistaken, or disguis'd, that they ought not to be at all depended on, without a farther more fair and nice Examination.

Jan. 29. 1712.

WILLIAM WHISTON

POSTSCRIPT.

SINCE Mr. Lock is here and every where esteem'd an eminent *Free-Thinker*; and that not seldom in the irreligious sense of the Words; nay has been very often esteem'd no better than a *Deist*; I shall here, by way of Vindication of his Memory, and in Hopes that his Authority may make some Impression on all of us, and particularly on the real irreligious *Free Thinkers* themselves, produce unquestionable Evidence of his fixed and last Sentiments about such Matters, from his own Words in two Letters to two of his intimate Friends; the Former of which was written and sent before, and the Latter written before, but order'd to be sent not till after, his Death; both which I have leave to publish upon this Occasion. The concluding Words of the Former are these.

I wish you all manner of Prosperity in this World, and the Everlasting Happiness of the World to come, God send us a happy Meeting in the Resurrection of the Just. Adieu.

Those of the Latter are these.

May you live Long and Happy in the Enjoyment of Health, Freedom, Content, and all those Blessings which Providence has bestowed on you, and your Vertue intitles you to. I know you lov'd me living, and will preserve my Memory now I am dead. All the use to be made of it is, that this World is a Scene of Vanity, that soon passes away, and affords no solid Satisfaction but the Consciousness of doing well, and the Hopes of another Life. This is what I can say by Experience, and what you will find when you come to make up your Account. Adieu. I leave my best Wishes with you,

J. Lock.

The Expressions in both are so sensible, serious and christian; and come from a Person of such great Sagacity, Integrity, and Freedom, as make them exceeding Remarkable. The Language of the latter is also so agreeable to that of the *Apostolical Constitutions* lib. VII. cap. 33. that I cannot but add the Passage here also by way of Conclusion, and for the Readers serious Consideration.

Thou hast demonstrated to every Man by implanted Knowledge, and natural Judgment, and the Admonitions of the Law, How the Possession of Riches is not everlasting; the Ornament of Beauty is not perpetual; Our Strength and Force are easily dissolv'd; and that all is Vapour and Vanity; and that only the good Conscience of Faith unfeigned passes through the midst of the Heavens; and returning with Truth, takes hold of the right Hand of the Joy which is to come.

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